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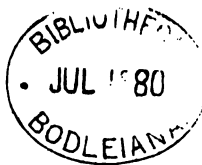
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Author of "Fifty Years' Biographical Reminiscences," "Celebrities I have Known," "Fashion Then and Now," &c., &c.

"Lord of himself ; that heritage of woe."

BYRON.

VOL. III.



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LORD OF HIMSELF.

CHAPTER I.

Much time and trouble this poor play has cost.

DRYDEN.

UNDER the hope of being appointed High Sheriff of the county, a hope that was fully realised, Mr. Clarendon gave orders for a spacious ball room to be erected, and this room, by the aid of Mr. Simmons, costumier, of Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, London, was to be converted into a theatre. No expense was to be spared to render it perfect.

While the party at Riversdale were discussing the merits of many plays, the Clarendons were equally engaged upon the same

subject. The morning arrived when the congress was to meet at the Priory, and on assembling in the Green room Lord Albert Wittingham was unanimously called upon to take the chair. The proceedings then commenced.

It would be tedious, however, to describe the various suggestions that were made by those interested in the performance; suffice it to say that after a lengthened discussion a programme was agreed upon. Mrs. Clarendon was anxious for a comedietta, in which she would be willing to take any part. Miss Clarendon suggested *tableaux*, the arrangement of which, if upon classical subjects, she would, with pleasure, undertake. Miss Susan thought that a drama in blank verse, which she had written, entitled, "The Prisoner of Lochleven," would prove a success, assigning to herself the part of the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots. Miss Matilda proposed scenes from *Semiramide*, *Norma* and *Il Trovatore*, in which Lady Albert, Miss Clifford and herself could

take the principal parts, but, unfortunately, it was found that none of the men were equal to the male characters; she then suggested the *Rivals* wishing to act "Lydia Languish" to the "Captain Absolute" of a gallant young officer, Lieutenant Patrick O'Hara, who excused himself by saying that Sir Lucius O'Trigger was much more in his line. Lady Albert Wittingham said that a friend of hers, Mr. Baimbridge, who had all the dresses for *Creatures of Impulse*, would be happy to lend them; if required would take any part allotted to him, and would, moreover, superintend the getting up of that piece; this, with an operetta for Miss Matilda, or a comedietta would form a good evening's entertainment.

The gentlemen left it to the ladies to decide as they were willing to assist the performance in every possible way. Lord Albert was appealed to, to settle the knotty point, who suggested that the Misses Clarendon should select any piece that was practicable which they should themselves cast, and that

Creatures of Impulse should be the after-piece. This was agreed to, and the three young ladies retired to arrange their portion of the programme, calling in Lieutenant O'Hara and Harry Northam to their council, for Sophia Clifford, though she took no part in the selection, was willing to undertake any character allotted her, more especially as Northam would, she felt assured, uphold her interest.

Luncheon being announced the meeting was adjourned for an hour and a half, at the expiration of which Lord Alfred again took the chair, and read the following programme :—

THE PRIORY AMATEUR THEATRICALS.

The performance will commence with

THE DAY AFTER THE WEDDING.

LORD RIVERS	Captain Northam.
COLONEL FREELOVE . .	F. R. Baimbridge, Esq.
JAMES	Lieutenant O'Hara, R.N.
LADY ELIZABETH FREELOVE	Mrs. Clarendon.
MRS. DAVIS	Mrs. Freeland.

Recitation, "Collins' Ode on the Passions" . Miss Clarendon.

Ballad, "Home, Sweet Home" Lady Hovingham.

Recitation, "Sad, lonely Isle," from an unpublished Dramatic Poem entitled, "The Prisoner of Lochleven," by Miss Susan Clarendon who will appear in the character of MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

After which

THE SINGING LESSON SCENE FROM *IL BARBIERE DE SEVIGLA*.

DOCTOR BARTOLO Mr. Cecil Barratt.

COUNT ALMAVIVA Captain Collison.

ROSINA Miss Matilda Clarendon,

Who will introduce, "Rode's Variations."

Ballad, "Tom Bowling" Lord Hovingham.

Followed by the Balcony Scene from

ROMEO AND JULIET.

ROMEO Captain Northam.

JULIET Miss Sophia Clifford,

Who will introduce, "Casta Dirra."

The whole to conclude with

CREATURES OF IMPULSE,

With new Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations, in which Lady Albert Wittingham will appear as "POPETTO;" the rest of the characters by Captain Northam, Lieutenant O'Hara, R.N., F. R. Baimbridge, Esq.

Villagers by members of the Priory Corps Dramatique.

"God Save the Queen" by the Company.

Solo Parts: Lady Albert Wittingham, Miss Matilda Clarendon and Captain Collison.

Acting and Stage Manager . . . Lord Albert Wittingham.

VIVAT REGINA.

Upon the following morning the Misses Boken arrived at the Priory, and a meeting of the *corps dramatique* was called to ascertain whether the eldest could not be prevailed upon to take a part. After the usual introductions, during which the Clarendon girls had commented to their friend upon the Yankee girl, whose twang would ruin any piece, Lord

Albert read the programme, and addressing himself to Kitty, said—

“I believe you are up in many charades.”

“Sum—I am,” was the reply, which provoked a smile from “Hatred.”

“It is unlucky,” he proceeded, “that you were unable to attend the meeting yesterday.”

“We were sadly squeered at being unfortunately delayed in town,” answered Kitty. “But Emily went ‘mousing’ in Bond Street, and staid out so long it was too late for the train.”

“Mousing?” exclaimed “Malice.” “Pray what does that mean?”

“Why, looking in at all the shop windows,” responded the heiress.

“I fear it is almost too late to get up a charade,” continued the acting manager, “but we might easily arrange a *tableau*.”

“The last charade we acted at Sarratoga Springs was not very difficult. The word was ‘Breakfast,’ written by young Gerant, the Theodore Hook of the States. I was the

bride, Miss Savern; Sarah, my maid. 'Break' was the first syllable. All the wedding presents were laid out, and Sarah busily dusting them demolished some valuable old Indian china. Then we came to the second, 'fast,' when young Cooper, the bridegroom that was to be, appeared dressed very loud—'loud' echoed, 'Uncharitableness.' He was censured by his father for his 'fast habits,' and after some excellent parental advice the scene ended. The whole word introduced us at the breakfast table where the usual number of speeches were made. Gerant, as a guest, proposed the ladies in a genuine republican speech as the true aristocracy, who rule without laws, judge without jury, decide without appeal, and are never in the wrong."

"Capital," exclaimed the majority of the party.

"Vulgar," exclaimed the three evil spirits.

"Were we not pressed for time," said Lord Albert, "we would willingly get up that excellent charade, for the breakfast scene

gives great scope for humourous speeches. Have you a copy of it?"

"No, young Gerant promised to let me have it, and I expect it by next mail."

"You spoke," interrupted Miss Clarendon, "of that gentleman—I did not quite catch his name—as being the Theodore Hook of the States. Has he ever appeared in print?"

"Often," she replied. "His extemporaneous lines on the marriage of a young man with one Miss Anne Bread—an odd name, ain't it?—appeared in the *Sarratoga News*."

"Oh, do let us hear it," said Chesterford, who, to adopt an expressive but rather vulgar phrase, had been struck all of a heap at Kitty Boken's beauty and *naïvété*.

"Well, Gerant, who I calculate has a considerable amount of brains, was asked to propose the bride's health, upon which he rose and said, 'I address you in the person of the happy bridegroom :

While *belles* around the Graces spread,
And beaux around them flutter,
I'll be content with *any* Bread,
And won't have any *but-her* (butter)."

“Worthy of Hook!” exclaimed Charley.

“Extemporaneous,” said “Uncharitableness,” *sotto voce*, to her next neighbour. “An impromptu *fait a loisir*.”

“Well, Miss Boken,” said the acting manager, “it will be impossible to get up any *tableaux* here; but during the London season I will speak to Lady Beauville, who gives brilliant entertainments, to enlist you into her *corps pictorial*.”

“Thank you,” responded the young lady; “I should like it immensely.”

“And you may depend upon my arranging a suitable *tableau* in which you shall be the heroine. What say you to ‘Lady Macbeth,’ ‘Portia,’ ‘Volumnia,’ ‘Cleopatra,’ ‘Hermione,’ ‘Medora,’ ‘The Brigand’s Wife,’ ‘The Maid of Saragoza’? Either of the above characters would suit you well.”

“You are very complimentary, Lord Albert,” replied Kitty, with a gracious smile. “I’m not well up in the dagger scene, never yet having instigated a murder. I know little of a Venetian Court of Law; I fear

Caius Marcius Coriolanus would turn as deaf an ear to me as he did to the passionate appeal of his noble mother; with regard to 'Cleopatra,' I have no doubt, when I apply the asp to my arm, my death will be hailed with cheers, whether from the fine conception I have of the character of the Queen of Egypt, or the delight of the audience in not seeing me again would remain a mystery, except in the breasts of those who happened to be present on the occasion."

"Oh! oh!" exclaimed all; while Charley added, "As the 'Courtier' says, in that admirable farce, *Tom Thumb*—'Your modesty is a flambeau to your understanding.'"

"As for 'Hermione,'" continued, the handsome American girl, "I might succeed in the 'statue' scene, for then my American twang would not be heard. I fancy I could enter into the feeling of 'Medora,' when she exclaims—

Oh! many a night on this lone couch reclined,
My dreaming fear with storms hath wing'd the wind,
And deem'd the breath that faintly fann'd thy sail
The murmuring prelude of the ruder gale;

Though soft, it seem'd the low, prophetic dirge,
That mourn'd thee floating on the savage surge ;
Still would I rise to rouse the beacon fire,
Lest spies less true should let the blaze expire,
And many a restless hour outwatch'd each star,
And morning came—and still thou wert afar."

The feeling with which the above lines were uttered called forth a burst of applause.

"Nor do I object to the 'Brigand's Wife,'" she proceeded, "or the Spanish 'Maid of Saragoza'; but I am quite ashamed of myself for dwelling so long on the offensive pronoun I."

After some discussion a *tableau* from the *Corsair* was arranged, to take place on some future evening, in which Chesterford volunteered to represent "Conrad" welcoming "Medora" after his return from a lawless cruise.

"You'll look the part of 'Medora' to perfection," said Chesterford.

"Yes," interrupted Emily; "she wasn't behind the doors when beauty was given out."

"Do not forget," continued Charley;

“you have to realise that beautiful description of our parting—

He dared not raise to his that deep blue eye
Which downcast droop'd in tearless agony,
Her long fair hair lay floating o'er his arms,
In all the wildness of dishevell'd charms.”

“If you go on in that strain,” said Kitty, “I shall be awfully riled; remember, praise to the face is open disgrace.”

“I assure you, Miss Boken,” pursued Chesterford, “that I never say what I do not think.”

“Very well,” said Kitty. “I hate what Sam Slick calls ‘soft sawdor,’ and I calculate your Dean Swift was right when he wrote: ‘Flattery is the worst and falsest way of showing your esteem.’ I daré say, Mr. Chesterford, you believe all the stories, or Americanisms, as they are called, which are copied into your papers.”

“Not always,” responded Charley; “for instance, I last week read the following, and at once pronounced it to be an invention—

“ ‘ Mr. Jones felodeceed this morning successfully. He Hymeneated three years ago, and he will be sepulchred to-morrow.’ ”

“ You are right,” responded Kitty, and it is a pity that your countrymen are not all as sensible and liberal as you are.”

Chesterford was delighted with this compliment, and from that moment struck up a friendship with the fair Kitty.

The *Corsair tableau* never did come off, for when the subject was mentioned to Mrs. Clarendon a decided veto was put upon it.

In due course of time the theatre was erected, the scenery arranged, the dresses prepared, and rehearsals called ; then occurred the various jealousies, frettings, clashing vanities, and petty quarrels which usually occur between performers of all classes, whether professional or amateurs.

“ Hatred,” (Miss Clarendon) was very severe upon Lady Albert for not having assisted her in getting up *tableaux* ; “ Malice ” (Miss Susan Clarendon) was furious at her

drama being rejected, and never forgave Miss Clifford for taking the part of "Juliet," she being herself ambitious to represent Capulet's ill-fated daughter to the "Romeo" of her Irish admirer, to whom she offered the part. An O'Montagu, with a Tipperary brogue, would have been a novelty rarely seen on the stage. "Uncharitableness" (Miss Matilda Clarendon) took an irreconcilable dislike to Lord Albert for not having selected scenes from *Semiramide*, *Norma*, and *Il Trovatore*.

Sophia Clifford never in the slightest degree murmured, being too happy even in the mimic scene to listen to the protestations of love from the impassioned "Romeo"; Lady Albert was equally pleased with her part, which she had already acted with the greatest success.

The first rehearsal without books was called for eleven o'clock, and, punctually at that hour, Lord Albert Wittingham found himself alone in his glory. Seated on the stage, close to the proscenium, a small table

before him, upon which was the prompt book and a bell, he patiently awaited the arrival of those who were to appear in *The Day After the Wedding*. At last Mrs. Clarendon approached him—

“Dear Lord Albert, I am so sorry, but as yet I have hardly had time to study a line of my part. You must allow me to read it.”

“As Lady Paramount here,” responded the acting and stage manager, “you must be excused; but I hope to-morrow you will have learnt it sufficiently, so as to dispense with the book.”

“I’ll do my best; but really my time is very much occupied in sending out invitations and answering letters of those anxious to be present, that I am quite knocked up; but where is the call-boy? I told Humphries to order ‘Buttons,’ as you irreverently call him, to be here punctually at eleven. Please ring the bell, Lord Albert.”

This was done, and a youth decked out in a suit of Lincoln green, a broad stripe of gold down his trousers, and small gilt sugar-

loaf shaped buttons—enough to have furnished a tribe of Chippewaa Indians with those much coveted ornaments—appeared on the boards.

“I am rather late, ma’am, but I had to assist in clearing away the breakfast things.”

To judge by his hands and mouth he had not been content alone to clear away the things, for there were evident marks of his having helped himself to some strawberry jam, and a piece of fancy bread peeping out of his trouser pocket proved his devotion to that juvenile luxury—bread and marmalade.

Mr. Baimbridge, who had come from a distance, apologised for being late, his horse having cast a shoe on his way, which detained him for half an hour.

“Punctuality in rehearsals is absolutely necessary,” said he. “When I was manager of the A. D. C. Amateur Dramatic Club at Cambridge I inflicted a fine upon all who were late; but where’s my worthy brother-in-law, Lord Rivers?”

“I rather fancy,” replied Wittingham, “he

is rehearsing the part of Romeo with his beloved Juliet. I hope, however, his affair will not end as tragically as the love of Montague for the Capulet did ; but here he is, to answer for himself."

"We must wait a moment for O'Hara and Mrs. Freeland, for when once we begin to rehearse the piece we must go right through it."

At this moment O'Hara made his appearance, covered with mud, and looking very much like—"Sir Walter Blunt, now lighted from his horse, stain'd with the variation of each soil."

"I hope I've not kept you waiting," said the Emerald, "but I met with an accident in trying to make a short cut across the fields. The mettlesome ould crathur I was riding was baulked at the brook by the yelling of a cur, fell into it, and, bedad, I found myself floating in very untransparent water. However, I got the old mare out of it, forced her along, and here I am."

"I hope you will not suffer from your fall," said Mrs. Clarendon.

"No, not at all. I just took the liberty of stepping into the kitchen to dry my nether garments by the fire. What I should like would be what we call in Tipperary a 'whetler' of poteen."

Charles, addressing "Buttons"—

"Tell the butler to bring some whiskey for Mr. O'Hara."

The order was obeyed.

"Fait," said the Lieutenant, "this is glorious stuff—pure as any one of the cardinal virtues, and strong as fortitude, which is the champion of them all."

"Ah, Mrs. Freeland," said the acting manager, "I am glad to see you. We can now begin. Let down the curtain, and Thompson you, as head stage carpenter, will draw it up when the bell rings."

It would be tedious to describe the rehearsal. No one, with the exception of young Baimbridge, knew a line of their respective parts, and were equally ignorant as to the sides on which they should make their entrances and exits.

“I think,” said Wittingham, addressing Mrs. Clarendon, “you had better cross over to the left.”

“It will be all right at night,” responded the lady.

This is the stereotyped answer of all indifferent amateurs, and a more fatal one cannot be imagined. Professional artists, even of long-standing, arrange what is technically called “business” at rehearsals, and surely non-professionals ought to follow their example. A play to amateurs, in which they have never performed, is like a new play to regular actors, and every one that is conversant with theatrical affairs is aware that the most minute points are attended to by the latter at all rehearsals; hence follows the smoothness of the performance at night. With many honourable exceptions—notably, the “Old Stagers,” “Windsor Strollers,” the Roscius Dramatic, and, a few other clubs—rehearsals are perfect failures, the pieces are never thoroughly gone through from the first to the last scene as they

should be; the performers are imperfect, some are absent, and the prompter has to read the part, and others are gossiping, or what is termed "spooning," at the side wings instead of attending to their duties. The rehearsal of "The Day after the Wedding" having been got through in a very slovenly manner, Miss Clarendon recited Collins' "Ode on the Passions," and had often to appeal to that useful personage who "lost to sight," is "to memory dear," for the word.

Miss Susan Clarendon began her recitation from the "Prisoner of Lochleven" amidst a buzzing noise of talking both before and behind the scenes, for a few intruders had found their way into the auditorium—as modern fashion now describes the front of the house.

"It is impossible for me," said the ill-fated Mary Queen of Scots, "to do justice to my humble effusion if there is so much talking in the house."

“ Silence, ladies and gentlemen,” exclaimed Wittingham.

Miss Susan then proceeded—

“The following lines are supposed to be spoken by Francis, the Dauphin of France, previous to his marriage with Mary Stuart :—

What form divine bursts on my ravish'd sight,
Circled in beams of mild and steady light,
Girt with a virgin zone, her robes of purest white?
O'er thee, blest Princess, Heaven's purest gifts are
show'r'd
On thee, its best, its choicest blessings pour'd.”

“ By the powers ! ” said O'Hara, “ if she begins with the marriage of Mary, how will she ever get through the episodes of Darnley and Rizzio ? ”

Finding the audience not very attentive, Miss Susan wound up her effusion by calling upon “ kind ”—she pronounced it “ keind ”—“ heaven to—

Propitious prove,
And smooth the rugged path of State with love.”

The singing lesson from *Il Barbiere*

went off very well, Miss Matilda warbling forth "Rode's Variations." Such were the variations that the original air was scarcely discoverable. She also requested the accompanist to be prepared (in case she should be honoured with an *encore*, which, as she said, was not at all likely) with the music of "The Minstrel Boy," as she should introduce that song instead of repeating Rode's air.

Miss Matilda was aware that she would be honoured with an *encore*, as strict orders had been given to the household in the gallery to shout for one.

The scene from "Romeo and Juliet" was rehearsed to the life, and, at Wittingham's suggestion, the fair daughter of the Capulet introduced some "business" which has since been followed by an Italian *artiste* on the English boards, namely, Juliet lowering her scarf for Romeo to imprint impassioned kisses upon it. Being perfect in "Casta Diva," that splendid song was not rehearsed.

As Baimbridge had on several occasions

superintended the representation of "Creatures of Impulse," it went very smooth, and one and all were highly complimented at the attention they had paid to their instructor.

At the conclusion of the rehearsal, Captain Collinson recited an address written by Lord Albert Wittingham, full of point, and highly eulogistic to the Clarendons and the members of the *corps dramatique*. Some of the lines ran as follows :—

To Colonel and Lady Elizabeth Freeland—

Adopt, then, this plan, and the very next time
That in words you fall out, let these fall into rhyme.
Thus your sharpest disputes will conclude very soon,
And from jangling to jingling you'll chime into tune.

To Romeo and Juliet—

Oh, let me drop a tributary tear
On "Romeo's" grave, on loving "Juliet's" bier;
You to their worth must testimony give,
'Tis in your hearts alone their fame can live.

Some lines to Miss Susan Clarendon commenced thus—

Hail, Nature's poet, whom she taught alone
To sing her works in numbers like her own.

Upon which O'Hara, *sotto voce*, remarked—
“ ‘ All *Hail!* ’—what a splendid commence-
ment to an ‘ Ode to Winter.’ ”

Miss Matilda was thus referred to—

Sweet is the joy, when Rapture's fire
Flows from the Spirit of the Lyre.

Lieutenant O'Hara, who had served his
country as a midshipman during the Crimean
War, was thus alluded to—

As the young eagle to the blaze of day
Undazzled and undaunted turns his eyes,
So unappalled, where glory led the way,
Midst storms of war—midst mingling seas and skies,
The genuine offspring of O'Hara's name
Proved his high birth's hereditary claim,
And his applauding country hailed with joy
A future hero in the Irish boy.

Mrs. Clarendon was described as one—

Diffusing opulence and public good
Pattern fair of female fame
Softening with domestic life,
Fashion's splendid dazzling rays,
The well-beloved and loving wife.

Of Lady Hovingham it was said, in allu-
sion to her song—

My thoughts when through the world I roam
Are fondly turned to “ Home, Sweet Home.”

And of Lady Albert Wittingham—


Oh ! formed by Nature, and refin'd by Art,
With charms to win, and sense to fix the heart !
" Creature of Impulse," Fancy's fairest child,
How sweet to listen to such " wood-notes wild."
Thou can embellish Fiction's wildest theme,
And realise th' inspired poet's dream.

He wound up with rather an unmerited a compliment to the singing of "Tom Bowling," and Hovingham's *bonhomme*, concluding with modestly including himself and the author in Corneille's lines—

Le reste ne vaut pas l'honneur d'être nommée.

At length the important evening arrived, when, after the usual bustle of showing the audience to their seats, the overture was played, and the curtain rose. Everything went off very well, until towards the close of the performance, when an untoward event occurred. The company came forward to sing the National Anthem, and Lady Albert had just finished her solo when a volume of smoke was seen to issue from the back of the stage ; in a few seconds that part of the

building was enveloped in flames. The audience rushed to the doors, those on the stage followed, but the confusion was so great, and the cries for help so piercing, that many must have been trampled to death had not Lord Albert, in a tone showing that he had been accustomed to command, called upon all to retire in order. This was accordingly done, and happily attended without any serious damage to the affrighted visitors. In the meantime Harry Northam, who was the last to quit his post, heard the scream of a female proceeding from the back of the stage, and it instantly flashed across his mind that Miss Clifford, who was suffering from headache, had not joined in the National Anthem. Rushing wildly to the door of the green room, where he had last seen her, a sight presented itself that harrowed his very soul. Extended on the floor, the room densely filled with smoke, flames issuing from all parts of it, lay a female form which he immediately recognised as that of his beloved Sophia. Making his way



through every obstacle, he raised her up, and bore her in his arms through the increasing raging element. A piece of timber to which the "flies" were attached, struck him a heavy blow upon the arm, but regardless of the pain it caused, he bore his precious burthen safely through the building, and with the aid of Lady Albert and others placed her on her sofa, where she was soon restored to consciousness.

Fortunately some engines were at hand, and thanks to the exertions of the guests and domestic servants, the fire was got under. Upon inspecting the building the following morning it was found that the walls were not damaged, a large portion of the scenery alone being destroyed.

The fire originated through the carelessness of a scene shifter, who incautiously left a candle burning close to some wood shavings at the back of the stage, and when the curtain drew up for the company to sing "God Save the Queen," the current of air caused, an ignition which soon spread with

frightful rapidity. The entire audience were so overcome with nervousness that they took leave of Mrs. Clarendon and retired to their own homes, those in the house eagerly sought their rooms to meditate with gratitude on their providential escape.

Captain Northam's accident was more severe than it was at first considered to be; fortunately the medical man that attended the Priory was one of the visitors, under whose care the sufferer was placed. As Northam was about to retire for the night, a note was placed in his hands—

“To you I am indebted for my life; accept the grateful thanks of yours most sincerely devoted,

“SOPHIA.”

This produced even a more beneficial effect upon the patient than the remedies Doctor Parkhurst had prescribed.



CHAPTER II.

Meanwhile, new pastimes for the eye,
The ear, the fancy quick succeed.

MOORE.

THE Amateur Theatricals had created so great a sensation in the country, that Mrs. Clarendon felt a longing disposition to renew them in her Bryanstone Square Mansion, during the London season, but the suggestion was vehemently opposed by her daughters, who pointed out the difficulties that would attend such a performance. The drawing-room, though large, was not suited for a theatre, as there was no way of getting to the stage except through the body of the room; then there was the damage that would be done to the walls.

This remark was overheard by the pater-familias, who at once joined the opposition, remarking that the gilt cornices and the Italian painted ceiling, after a design of Angelica Koffman's, would be completely ruined.

Then, again, the difficulty of finding a *corps dramatique*, and if found, the still greater difficulty of getting them to attend rehearsals.

The young ladies, backed up by their new ally, Mr. Clarendon, gained the day, and by a unanimous vote carried the question of *tableaux vivants*.

With a view of preventing any jealousy, it was decided that each of the daughters should select three subjects, and have the entire management of them, the last one being appropriated to the hostess.

The above knotty point being settled, arrangements were made for carrying out the project.

"I think," said Miss Clarendon, "as my selection will be historical or classical subjects,

I shall require no other lady to take part in them."

"And as I shall embody," exclaimed Miss Susan, "the principal scene in my new drama, 'Hero and Leander,' and take the part of 'Hero, the Priestess of Venus,' I require no aid."

Miss Matilda, too, declared that in her operatic and *Ivanhoe* *tableau* she would appear as "la Cenerentola" and "Rebecca," thereby requiring no other female.

"Mamma," said the three "can select who she pleases for the last *tableaux*."

"Probably her pets, Lady Albert and Miss Sophia Clifford," exclaimed "Uncharitableness," with a sneer.

In the meantime preparations were being made. Invitations were sent out, male volunteers offered their services, and a splendid gilt frame, relieved by dark coloured velvet, had arrived from Messrs. Bright and Gasket.

On the morning previous to the performance, the highly-scented programmes were issued. They ran as follows :—

TABLEAU.

Interview of Berengaria, the beautiful daughter of Sancho, the wise King of Navarre, with Richard Cœur de Lion, when Count of Poitou, at a grand tournament given by her gallant brother Sancho, at Pampeluna, Berengaria's native city.

RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED Mr. Archdale.

SANCHO THE STRONG (Brother of Berengaria) Mr. Milsom.

Appropriate Music—"Go where Glory waits thee."—*Stevenson*.

TABLEAU.

An incident in Miss Susan Clarendon's new drama, "Hero in Sestos."

HERO, the Priestess of Venus, directing the course of Leander by holding a burning torch on the top of a high tower as her lover swam across the Hellespont—
Miss Susan Clarendon.

Appropriate Music—"Over the Sea, over the Sea."

RECITATIVE.

The night wind is moaning with mournful sigh,
There glimmeth no moon in the misty sky,
No star over Helle's sea;
Yet, yet, there is shining one holy light,
One love-kindled star through the deep of night
To lead me, sweet Hero, to thee.
Thus saying he plunged in the foamy stream,
Still fixing his gaze on that distant beam
No eye but a lover's could see.—*Moore*.

TABLEAU.

Ball Room Scene in *Cenerentola*—"La Cenerentola" trying on the glass slipper.

CENERENTOLA Miss Matilda Clarendon.

THE PRINCE Mr. Beaufoy.

Appropriate Music—Finale to the opera of "*Cenerentola*."

The remaining *tableaux* represented Eleanor of Castile, and her consort, Edward I.; Katherine of Arragon and Henry VIII., in which Miss Clarendon appeared as Eleanor and Katherine; Edward I., Mr. Milsom; Henry VIII., Captain Northam.—A scene from the “Prisoner of Lochleven,” and one from the tragedy of “Don Manuel,” written by Miss Susan Clarendon.—Scene Lochleven—“Mary Queen of Scots,” Miss Susan Clarendon; “Sir Nicholas Throgmorton” (Ambassador from Queen Elizabeth), Mr. Riversdale.—Scene from “Don Manuel,” founded on an incident which occurred after the battle of Tolosa, in which the Spaniards defeated the Moors in the neighbourhood of Cordova—Victoria offering her distracted father, Don Manuel, who is moaning over the absence of his son, a cup of wine. As he is taking it, a horn is heard, when Manuel exclaims—“I need no cordial, ’tis Alonzo’s horn.”

VICTORIA Miss Susan Clarendon.
DON MANUEL Mr. Beaufoy.

VOL. III.

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TABLEAU.

Scene from "Ivanhoe"—As she spoke she threw open the latticed window which led to the vartisan, and in an instant after stood on the very verge of the parapet, with not the slightest screen between her and the tremendous depth below.—As Bois-Guilbert offers to advance, the Rose of Sharon thus exclaims—"Remain where thou art, proud Templar, or at thy choice advance—one foot nearer and I plunge myself from the precipice; my body shall be crushed out of the very form of humanity upon the stones of that court-yard, ere it becomes the victim of thy brutality."

REBECCA Miss Matilda Clarendon
 BRIAN DE BOIS-GUILBERT Mr. Archdale.

TABLEAU.

Arranged by Lady Albert Wittingham, founded on a scene in "Lalla Rookh," entitled "The Feast of Roses."

PART I.

Namouna, the Enchantress, addressing the mystic spell to the young Nourmahal.

PART II.

Selim and Nourmahal.

The mask is off—the charm is wrought—
 And Selim to his heart has caught,
 In blushes more than ever bright,
 His Nourmahal, his Harem's Light!
 And well-do vanish'd frowns enhance,
 The charm of every brighten'd glance;
 And dearer seems each dawning smile
 For having lost its light awhile;
 And happier now for all her sighs,
 As on his arm her head reposes—
 She whispers him, with laughing eyes,
 "Remember, love, the Feast of Roses."

No sooner had the programmes appeared

than a conference of the three sisters—Hatred, Malice, and Uncharitableness—was held.

“Did you ever?” exclaimed the eldest.

“No, I never,” said Miss Susan.

“Only to think,” chimed in Miss Matilda, “that mamma should be weak enough to pay such a fulsome compliment to that odious Sophia Clifford!”

“Nourmahal indeed! It’s too bad—much too bad—quite disgusting!” exclaimed the trio.

“I should like to pay her off,” said Hatred.

“So should I—and I,” burst simultaneously forth from Malice and Uncharitableness.

“Leave it to me,” said their cousin, Frank Ripplingale, commonly called “the Rip,” a wild mischievous youth just come home for the holidays. “I owe both Lady Albert and Miss Clifford a grudge—they are regular stuck up people. I know a trick we played off on old Dubret our French master, powder-

ing his *Corneille* with the strongest black pepper, and when he commenced—

Rome, l'unique objet de mon resentment !

Rome, à qui vient ton bras d'immoler mon amant !

he began sneezing, and never stopped for at least two minutes. Would it not be a jolly lark to strew the 'Bower of Roses' with pepper."

"Oh, Frank ! oh, Frank ! oh, Frank !" exclaimed the three. "What an idea !"

Despite of this exclamation, the young ladies did not show by their looks that they disapproved of it.

"Well, you'll promise me not to peach," said the mad scapegrace. "Honour among thieves, you know !"

Before any answer could be made, he was out of the room, whether to carry out his nefarious intention or not, remains to be seen.

The *tableaux*, though there was an awful time between each, went off tolerably well, amid the remarks "How beautiful ! Charm-

ing ! So artistic ! Lovely ! ” uttered by many who would have given anything to have changed the heated atmosphere, caused by crowds of people and flaming gas, for a cooler room, and who were, moreover, thoroughly bored with having to wait so long, and sit so patiently for a moment’s view.

In the turret scene, as Rebecca stood close to the parapet, a sudden sneezing was heard proceeding from the Fair Flower of Palestine, echoed by Bois de Guilbert ; after a time the sneezing became so forcible and spasmodic that the curtain dropped on the *tableau*. To describe the scene that took place in the young ladies’ dressing-room would be impossible, it must be left to the imagination of the reader ; the three sisters had worked themselves up to a pitch of ungovernable anger. Beside them stood the culprit making every attempt to explain the cause of the misfortune, but they would not listen to a word, Miss Matilda was in hysterics, Miss Clarendon was applying handkerchiefs steeped in Eau de Cologne to her sister’s burning forehead. Miss Susan

was indulging in not very parliamentary language.

“Only hear me,” said Frank, beseechingly, but his appeal was made in vain.

Denunciations were showered upon his devoted head ; he was told that the promised visit to the theatres would not be carried out, that his holidays would be curtailed, and other threats not very palatable to his proud spirit. Revenge and anger then took possession of his breast, and he dashed out of the room determined to carry out war to the bitter end.

Had he been listened to, his simple tale would have, or ought to have appeased the formidable trio. The fact was he had in the morning purchased from a neighbouring grocers a large paper full of the strongest black pepper, and while crouching behind the scenes, so as to be ready to sprinkle the balcony in the next *tableau*, he was discovered by Mr. Clarendon, who peremptorily ordered him away. In his haste and confusion he spilt the pepper, and had not time to gather

it entirely up. In his attempt to do so, a great portion fell on the ledge upon which Juliet was to recline. Hence the *dénouement*, so fatal to the ill-fated Rebecca.

The last *tableau* was a great success, and created a perfect *furor*. Lady Albert had arranged that during her scene with Nourmahal, a voice from behind should sing the following verses, accompanied by the harp, as applicable to her as the Enchantress:—

From Chindara's warbling fount I come,
Call'd by that moonlight's garland spell;
From Chindara's fount, my fairy home,
Where in music, morn and night, I dwell,
Where later in the air are heard about,
And voices are singing the whole day long,
And every sigh the heart breathes out,
Is turn'd, as it leaves the lips, to song!
Hither I come,
From my fairy home,
And if there's a magic in Music's strain,
I swear by the breath
Of that moonlight wreath,
Thy lover shall sigh at thy feet again.

The verse was exquisitely well sung and produced a wonderful effect. In the second part, where young Selim clasps Nourmahal in his arms, the voice from behind proceeded

in a joyous strain to sing the following verse :—

There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,
When two, that are link'd in one heavenly tie,
With heart never changing, and brow never cold,
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die;
One hour of a passion so sacred is worth
Whole ages of heartless and wand'ring bliss,
And, oh ! if there be an Elysium on earth,
It is this—it is this !

The rage of the three furies may well be imagined, especially as the last *tableaux* had been called for thrice ; they, however, consoled themselves with the hope that when they appeared before the curtain, after being called for and welcomed with a shower of bouquets, which had previously been arranged by a well organised band of friendly *claquers*, that this triumph would be complete, strict injunctions having been issued that none but the daughters of the house should receive such an ovation. From a preconcerted signal at the end of the performance a loud call was made for the Misses Clarendon ; in order to give due effect to the scene they were to appear in front of the curtain, advance and

curtesy to the audience. Loud was the applause, and most plentiful were the offerings of Flora. As the young ladies advanced, an explosion was heard, then another, then another. What could it mean. If they moved to the right, or the left, or advanced, a running fire was kept up, and it was now evident that the boards had been strewn with detonating balls. The two eldest fainted away, the younger was about to fall down with fright when she was caught in the arms of her father, who had rushed from behind. The result might have proved more serious than the designers—who, like Shakespeare's engineer, were "hoisted on their own petard"—anticipated, and the *tableaux vivants* might have terminated in the *tableaux des morts*.





CHAPTER III.

Who should this stranger be ?

LILLO.

HITHERTO Joanna Melvill's prosperity, since her arrival in England, had been unclouded, but a thunderstorm was about to burst over her head. One morning during Lady Hovingham's absence from home, when his lordship was about to mount his horse to ride to the cover's side, a strange looking man was seen walking slowly up the avenue that led to the house.

"There's no thoroughfare ; if you have any business go in at the back way," shouted his lordship. "I don't half like the look of that fellow," he continued to himself. The man stopped for a moment, looked defiantly at the owner of the property, when Hovingham bellowed, "Jennings tell that tramp he'd

better be off;" with this he rode away in the opposite direction, fearful of being late for the meet.

No sooner was he out of sight than the stranger walked deliberately up to the front door, and gave a strong pull at the bell. Jennings, who had gone into the servants' hall to desire the footman to watch the tramp out of the premises, was startled at the sound of the door bell, which he concluded was from his master, who might have returned unexpectedly for his cigar case or flask. Upon answering the front bell, great was the butler's surprise to see the stranger clothed in a worn-out suit, standing on the steps.

"His lordship is gone out," said Jennings, "and is not likely to be back until late."

"My business is not with his lordship. I have a communication of importance to make to Miss Melvill. Be kind enough to give her that paper. I will wait here for the reply."

The butler scanned the man from head to foot. Though his clothes were, what is usually termed, "seedy," his beard unshaven,

there was something that showed the butler that the stranger was of no mean birth, and that he had evidently seen better days.

"If you will walk into the back of the house, you can wait in the servants' hall until I bring you the answer, that is if there is any."

"I prefer remaining here," responded the man, who, in handing the paper, which was enclosed in a sealed, yet somewhat soiled envelope, showed a hand which confirmed Jennings that he was a real gentleman, probably the secretary of some missionary or charitable institution.

In the meantime Miss Melvill had retired to her *boudoir*, and was about to enclose a cheque to her guardian which she had wheedled out of her cousin, when her ladies-maid tapped at the door.

"Come in, Higgins; what is it you want?"

"Please, miss," said the other, "Jennings tells me there is a very obstreperous man at the door, who has been lurking about for the

last half-hour. He won't take no denial, says he hasn't any business with my lord, and insists on his giving you this envelope. It's hardly fit to be touched with a pair of tongs. It smells strongly of vile tobacco. I warrant he's some begging impostor. I like his impudence in not taking a refusal."

"Let me have the paper," responded Joanna, "it may be a case of real distress."

"A case for the treadmill, miss; such fellows ought not to be allowed to go loose."

Joanna opened the envelope; it enclosed a scrap of paper with the following words:—

"I must see you. I hold you to your word. I am now free.—PAUL GUIDOTTI."

Joanna turned deadly pale.

"No wonder, miss, that vile, stale tobacco has made you feel faintish. Smell these salts."

"I am better now," responded her mistress. "Tell the bearer of this I will see him in the morning room."

"Lor, miss, he an't fit to enter the house;

perhaps I'd better give him a shilling from you, and tell him to walk off."

"Perhaps you had better have him shown into the smoking-room."

"Very well, miss ; but I'll tell Jennings to keep a sharp eye on him, and remove any articles that he might feel disposed to lay his hands upon."

With spirits little suited to the bold tone with which Joanna Melvill had made up her mind to adopt towards the unwelcome intruder, she lingered some minutes ere she could summon sufficient resolution to meet him.

Upon entering the room Paul rose from his chair, and made a movement towards Miss Melvill, who drew back, uncertain whether the person she saw, so unlike the Count of former days, was, or was not, the same who had so earnestly sought an interview.

"You have taken me, sir, by surprise," said Joanna, "and I must add I think most unfairly so. The vow you have referred to was made under different circumstances ; it

was to the noble Count Paul Guidotti I pledged my faith, not to the plebeian, Louis Cambesi. You dishonourably kept your marriage back from me; you basely took advantage of my youth and innocence. I must, therefore, beg to premise that in granting, through your pressing solicitation, this meeting, I trust I shall not be insulted by any further reference to the past."

"I assure you," replied Paul, wholly unembarrassed, and with a placid smile, "that the motives which induced me to solicit this interview are of a nature such as I apprehend may be completely answered without in the slightest degree compromising you."

"On that assurance, I will listen to them."

A short silence ensued.

"You will see by my altered appearance," proceeded Guidotti, "that misfortunes have overtaken me. I am now reduced to the last stage of poverty." Here Miss Melvill was about to interpose by offering temporary relief, but he checked her. "Hear me out.

I do not attempt to palliate my past conduct. The love I felt for you is still unabated, but let that pass." At the utterance of this sentiment Joanna's face glowed with the heat of fire, and was tinted with the deepest crimson. She rose from her chair, unconscious that she did so; sat down again, bit her lips, and betrayed all the symptoms of fear, mingled with hatred. After a few minutes' pause, Paul continued, "I have much more to say. I did not ask this interview to afflict you. Say, then, will you accept my proffered hand. Shall this heart of mine that throbs, that pants to press thee, penitent, to my heart—say shall it know such bliss?"

"Hold," said Joanna, retreating from the offered embrace. "Humiliated as I am, I shrink from an embrace. If money can be of any service I will willingly bestow it."

"Ask this toil-worn frame, ask the tear-traced furrows on these cheeks, or grief-blanchèd hairs upon this head, still young; ask this shattered remnant of what I once

was, if I have not some claim on your pity, if not on your love."

"Another allusion to the subject and I leave the room."

Finding his professions of affection of no avail, he suddenly changed his tone.

"Listen, then, to me. Shame, beggary, imprisonment, unpitied misery, and the curses of mankind have made this life hateful; driven to desperation and madness I left France for this country. Money I must have. My wants are pressing. Should I fail here, your guardian may prove more liberal, especially when I remind him how with masked cards and false dice we ruined many a poor wretch at Rome. Confederates in crime, surely there should be a fair division of our gains. He is thriving. I am a beggar, a tramp, rudely thrust from your door by one under whose roof you, my affianced wife, reside."

"Mean, despicable villain," exclaimed Joanna, roused to a pitch of fury. "I scorn you and your threats. Mr. Melvill is a man

of honour, and no calumny can affect him. Leave me."

"If you will not listen to reason, perhaps his lordship will, so here I remain."

Joanna, finding that Paul had thrown off the mask of hypocrisy, and had now shown himself in his true colours, that of a mercenary villain, she restrained her anger. Reflecting how he could wreak his vengeance, not alone upon herself but upon her guardian, to whom she was bound by the strongest ties of gratitude, and alarmed at his threats, she so far yielded to his demands as to say—

"Upon your solemn promise that you will never obtrude yourself upon me again, I will assist you in your present difficulties. This is all I can spare," handing him the cheque she was about to forward to her guardian.

"What's this?" he asked—"a cheque for fifty pounds? Make it a hundred, and I'll swear never again to intrude upon you."

"Impossible," she responded.

"Then take it back again," at the same time throwing the paper at her feet.

“I have no money in the house. Take this cheque, and I promise this day week to leave the other fifty pounds at the lodge.”

“Agreed; but mark me—honour among thieves—if you play me false, deceive or give me up to justice, I will wreak my vengeance on your head. Remember Albano!”

He rose to take his leave.

“One word more. If I presented this cheque in the garb I have been reduced to, I might be handed over to the magistrate. Perhaps, then, you will, out of the promised fifty, advance me five sovereigns. With that sum I can purchase a suitable suit.”

“Here is the money; and now may your life be devoted to better purposes than it hitherto has been.”

After the departure of this man, who once had been dearer to her than her life, Joanna wandered about the house in a strange excitement of mind, fearful that if driven to extremities Louis might again threaten her with exposure. Then again, how was she to account to her guardian for not sending him

the cheque she had promised him ? In order to distract and calm the turmoil of her mind, she took up her knitting work, and sat down in the window seat ; but thoughts of the past deepened her feeling, and soon her needle falling from her hand, her eyes wandering over the meadow over which the stranger must cross, she sunk into a fit of distraction.

Her reverie was so deep and earnest that she did not hear the door open as Hovingham came in. He stood, when he saw her absent look, and watched her in silence for some minutes. Then approaching and kissing her forehead—

“ Joanna,” he said to her kindly, “ what has occurred ? No bad news of Mr. Melvill, I hope ? ”

“ Oh, no, nothing,” she replied. “ I met that strange man in the avenue, and his wild look rather frightened me.”

“ The vagabond ! I’ll have him taken up if ever he comes here again to beg, borrow or steal, all of which I think he is fully capable.”



CHAPTER IV.

But melancholy poisons all her joys,
And secret sorrows all her hopes depress,
Consuming languor every bliss destroys,
And sad she droops, repining, comfortless.

PSYCHE.

IT has been said that “a reformed rake makes the best husband.” Now whether this adage is true and ought to be adopted, or false and ought to be exploded, we will not stop to enquire. Many instances *pro* and *con* have been advanced ; on one hand, it is said that when a young man has “sown his wild oats,” he is likely to steady down to a moral life ; on the other, it is affirmed that to eradicate ill-habits is a task of great difficulty. Certainly Lord Hovingham must be considered as belonging to the last class, for having passed a great portion of his early life in the society of the *demi-monde*, he un-

questionably was not suited for the married state.

He seemed quite to forget that a husband should be careful to keep up a lover-like attention to a wife, in order to preserve that bond of affection. He should avoid a careless and slovenly air, which men are too apt to indulge in after marriage. He should bear in mind that a wife is an object worthy of *les petits soins*, as well as of the greater duties, and it is by these lesser assiduities, constant attention, and little *délicatesses*, though all trifling in themselves, that a sincere passion manifests itself, more than by the highest acts of kindness and liberality; for Love, contrary to all other passions, shows itself more in small things than in great ones. Whenever a husband begins to betray an indifference towards these lower ones, it may safely be pronounced that tenderness will not long survive. How unspirited an obligation is duty alone!

The union of minds can consist only in love, confidence and sympathy. For the real

indwelling of any two souls united by marriage, it is essential, first, that they understand, and then that they appreciate and esteem one another; that they cherish mutual confidence, and a sympathy in each other's pursuits, tastes and aims. Coldness, distrust and want of sympathy, lead to dislike, misery, alienation, and is a moral death to their union, while, on the other hand, that union is obviously more living and more blessed, as their knowledge and esteem of each other are increased, and as their mutual confidence, sympathy and love are deepened. There can be no doubt, then, that matrimonial happiness depends upon a union of the above-mentioned qualities, and which cannot better be illustrated than by quoting Horace's animated description of perfect love :—

*Felices ter et ampliùs,
Quos irrupta tenet copula, nee malis,
Divulsus querimoniis,
Supremâ citius solvet amor die.*

*Thrice happy they in pure delights
Whom love with mutual bonds unites,
Unbroken by complaints or strife
E'en to the latest hour of life.*

It has been truly said that when a man chooses a woman for his friend, that there always exists a mixture of love in this friendship between man and woman, and then it is no longer pure. Therefore, let not love intermingle with this friendship, for it is the only occasion in which it ought to be dreaded and banished. Once let love of a married man or woman take the place of friendship, and the most fatal consequences will ensue—more fatal when a woman feels a passion for a man to whom she cannot be united. M. de Rivasol tells us that, wishing to disengage himself from one who had loved, not wisely but too well, he wrote a letter full of fine phrases, offering her a sentiment more pleasing, more solid than love; he spoke to her of erecting a temple to friendship. The woman, who was passionately attached to him, answered him in the following brief words—

“Buildings are not erected with ashes.”

Whether Joanna Melvill felt the passion of love equally strong, we are not prepared to say;

ambition, anxiety to redeem the past, probably formed some of the ingredients. Still, at any risk, she determined to hold sovereign sway over her cousin. She now became a constant visitor at Riversdale, and day after day did Lord Hovingham drink the intoxicating poison of flattery, submitting to the machinations of a coquette, until his principles became so warped and contaminated that he not only viewed his wife with indifference, but allowed himself to seek and find happiness in the society of a strong-minded, self-willed woman, who soon became the companion of his hours of delight, and the *confidante* of his domestic sorrows. With the inconsistency common to those principles which do not spring from the thought-restraining injunctions of religion, Hovingham laid the flattering unction to his soul, that there was no crime in transferring his affections to Joanna. He depended on a certain sense of honour and the calm temperament of his passions, to preserve him from any act of gross immorality, and Miss Melvill had so firmly persuaded him of her purity, that he never for a

moment doubted it. He firmly believed that himself and the object of his admiration would be quoted as examples of pure Platonic friendship, and his delirium, acting upon a weak brain, sometimes rose so high as to make him attach a merit to a preference, which, though it violated his marriage vows of devotion to one alone, he no longer attempted to disguise. Lady Hovingham felt the painful change in her situation, and her regrets were heightened by perceiving that Joanna Melvill assumed an avowed superiority, and gloried in paying and receiving those attentions which should have been the wife's exclusive privilege.

Hovingham never showed the slightest affection in his manner to his wife; he was civil in public, but in private cold and somewhat wayward. How different was his behaviour to Joanna! Truly might Margaret have exclaimed in the lines of the poet:—

With her he spent those pleasing hours
Which did to me belong,
She in his eyes did all things right,
While I did all things wrong.

The affair soon became the talk of the town. The equivocal term "affair" is a most extraordinary expletive. An affair of honour implies intentional murder, and an affair of gallantry describes one of those sins which are expressly forbidden in Sacred Writ. Soft terms are gossamer veils thrown over any breach in the Commandments, and, in our days, when proceedings are about to take place in the Divorce Court, the persons implicated are said "to have got into a mess."

The world of fashion were divided into two parties; some took the part of Lord Hovingham, others inveighed against the baseness of a husband in neglecting an amiable and pretty wife, whose affections he entirely possessed. The Francis Hovinghamites consisted principally of fast ladies and *roués*, while Lady Hovingham's vindicators were chiefly composed of the right-minded portion of the community.

Byron describes "ennui a growth of English root," and certainly there is no lack of

it in our otherwise highly-favoured land; while a French author pronounces it to be a moral indigestion caused by monotony of situations.

Unquestionably this feeling had obtruded itself into the breast of Lord Hovingham, for so sated was he of home when his charmer was absent, that he could never remain for any time in the same place. A garden party was about to be given by Squire and Mrs. Wolverton, whose property lay contiguous to Riversdale, and an invitation had been sent to Lord and Lady Hovingham, with a pressing request that they would themselves attend, and bring as many friends as possible, as a bazaar in aid of the funds for restoring the church at Shelford was to be held. In consequence of this, Margaret, with some difficulty, persuaded her husband to accept the invitation, and fill the house with those willing to support the undertaking.

A week previous to the garden party, Lord Hovingham said, and with an apparent air of truth, that business of great importance re-

specting some property he had in Essex would call him to London, but that he would make a point of returning in time to be present at the gathering at Shelford Lodge. The party assembled, and for three days no tidings were heard of the host, but, on the fourth morning, a letter reached Lady Hovingham stating that, through the law's delay, he was compelled to remain in London until the end of the week. A large party had assembled, and at breakfast many enquiries were made as to the cause of the host's absence. Lady Hovingham, ever ready to screen her husband, explained the cause, censuring his legal advisers for thus protracting the business.

"Law's delay," said Chesterford. "I fancy the gentlemen of the long robe are not entirely to blame, for I saw Frank riding with a lady in the Park, and I caught a glimpse of him with the same party at the Haymarket Theatre."

The blood rushed to Margaret's cheeks, for, in the letter she had received in the

morning, her husband had said that he passed the best part of the day in Lincoln's Inn Fields, had dined at his Club, where he passed the remainder of the evening.

"The heat is rather oppressive," said Margaret, hastily rising from her seat, and, rushing to her room, gave vent to a flood of tears.

"What's up?" exclaimed Chesterford. "I fear I made some mischief; but really Frank is so devoted to his wife, that I thought there were no secrets between them."

The sun was now setting gloriously in the west, an emblem of the extinction of Margaret's happiness. As she ascended the staircase to find such rest as she might in her solitary chamber, there to ponder over her fatal disappointment, and still more fatal future, the truth of those beautiful lines of Shakespeare's came vividly to her mind:—

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?
Rase out the molten troubles of the brain;
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?

Amid all her grief she cherished hope—a hope that her husband would prove loyal to her, and emancipate himself from the trammels that now chained him.

Lady Hovingham would have gladly remained in her room, but felt that in so doing she would give rise to all manner of surmises as to her absence, she therefore resolutely made up her mind to join the party at dinner, and assume a joyousness she did not possess.

At the end of the week, Lord Hovingham arrived by the early train, and was evidently not in the best of humours; he was surly to his wife, scarcely courteous to his guests, found fault with Jennings, the butler, and drove away poor little “Beppo,” the Italian greyhound, who came forward to welcome him on his return.

“Order the phaeton to be brought round at three o’clock,” he said to the footman, “and don’t slam the door.” Then, turning to his wife, he remarked, “I must go to the station, for I promised to meet the Melvills there.”

There won't be room in the fly for more than Mr. Melvill and his servant, so I shall drive Joanna home."

"And give up the garden party?"

"Yes. I don't half fancy a bazaar; besides which, I think it very bad taste that the Wolvertons did not send a special invitation to Mr. Melvill and his ward."

Affairs went on in this way for several days; no wonder, then, that Margaret began to complain of the conduct of her husband, his constant visits to Mr. Melvill's cottage, his long absences from home, his marked attention to his cousin, his equivocal answers when taxed with neglect. What grieved her most was the pernicious influence which Joanna had acquired over her husband's mind. This created a feeling of mistrust that nothing could control.

Joanna Melvill's ambition was to be presented at Court; it was therefore arranged between her and Lord Hovingham that every influence should be exerted to induce Lady Hovingham to present her. He felt that

she would be more graciously noticed by his fashionable friends if she went there countenanced by his wife. Contrary to all previous experience of Lady Hovingham's acquiescing compliance, she not only resolutely refused to present Miss Melvill, but expressed her determination not to be present at the Drawing Room on the day she was presented. This refusal led to a serious quarrel. Hovingham lost all control over himself, and accused his wife of childish jealousy, adding that if she or any of her relations or confidential friends dared to defame his cousin, he would demand a public reparation through the aid of the law.

"Dearest husband," said Margaret, whose tears could no longer be restrained, "the first wish of my heart is to promote your happiness." Here she sobbed violently.

Hovingham was for a moment softened; his natural goodness of heart struggled with the delirium of a culpable attachment, nor could he behold the tears he had forced to

flow without enduring the torment of self-condemnation.

Pained by the distress of which he knew himself to be the cause, he determined to press the subject no further, promising in future never again to give her cause for complaint. How often do we form resolutions when the still voice of reason has convinced our judgment, quite forgetting that we shall be required to keep them when the busy passions have raised an army of opponents. It is not till temptation again appears that we find the instability and weakness of our nature. Like an evil genius, no sooner had Joanna heard that Lady Hovingham had refused to present her, than she was busily employed in counter-acting the influence of the wife. Entering the drawing-room on the following day, she rushed up to Margaret, exclaiming—

“I know, my dearest cousin, you would have complied with my wish, but for some very potent reason. I remember how overcome you were with the heat of the last Drawing Room.

“Noble creature,” said Lord Hovingham, in an undertone. Then aloud he remarked, “Margaret, you ought to take a lesson from your cousin.”

It will thus be seen that Joanna was a perfect actress, and could suit her conversation to her company, and could set her features to her tongue with consummate skill. All modes of deportment were at her command, for she rightly judged that, by veiling her talents under the concealment of diffidence, they would burst afterwards on the world with additional splendour, even the kind-hearted Mrs. Fry was not more sedate, steadfast and demure than Joanna was when in the society of a serious family. Her face became more saintly at a meeting of any religious institution, where the clergy gave their valuable assistance, in whose presence her eyes were fixed calmly upon the earth, or raised piously to heaven.

It happened occasionally that Lady Hovingham was prevented by indisposition doing the honours of her own table, and Joanna,

with admirable grace, took her seat. Then the mask of prudence was partly thrown aside, and a general spirit of conversation prevailed. Topics of taste were introduced, living manners were discussed, wit and humour raised a smile, even on the most taciturn of visitors, and "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" thawed the ice of reserve, delighting all, especially the host, who contrasted the liveliness of his cousin to the quietness of his wife.

Things went on in this manner for some time, when one morning at breakfast, Jennings entered the room with a packet in his hand, which, he said, the boy who went for the letters had declined taking in as the postage was so heavy.

"Let me see it," said Hovingham. "It may enclose letters for Joanna from Rome. You may take it in."

He opened the packet, when, all of a sudden, Margaret's attention was fixed upon her husband, who was reading the foreign letter. The expression of his countenance

was that of anxiety and alarm. As she advanced to speak to him it deepened, when, suddenly turning pale, he hastily left the room. Everybody looked up.

"What is the matter, is my nephew ill?" asked Aunt Harriet.

"He is rather knocked up with the excitement of last week," said Joanna, though in her own mind she felt sure that a more weighty reason had caused him to turn so deadly white.

"Some impertinent letter from the Orange party at Rankston is probably the cause," calmly remarked Mr. Sharpness, who knew too well from his practice at the Central Criminal Court, that some much more serious affair had upset his client. With an eye to business, he followed his noble patron out of the room, determined to worm it out, and to offer his gratuitous services as a guest of his lordships.

Breakfast was finished in silence, when one after the other left the room, probably in the hope of having their curiosity gratified.

Joanna, hearing that Hovingham was in his morning-room, gently knocked at the door, and was admitted. Upon entering, she saw Frank still intensely occupied with the foreign letter.

“Read this,” Hovingham exclaimed, “and explain the meaning. Who is this fellow Louis Cambesi *alias* Paul Guidotti, *alias* Count Guidotti, who dares thus to address me?”

Joanna took the letter; it ran as follows:—

“At our last interview you extracted a promise from me that I would not again ask for assistance; nothing but dire necessity compels me to address you again. I am now incarcerated in prison, and require funds to fee my counsel to extricate me from the fangs of the law. Supplied with means, I shall be able to prove my innocence, for the forgery of which I am accused was perpetrated by another. When I freed you from your solemn vow, made at Albano, I considered

myself entitled to some compensation ; this you granted me. A thousand francs is the sum required, an order for which I trust you will send to Monsieur Fergus O'Lachlin, Poste Restante, Boulogne-sur-Mer.

“ M. O'Lachlin, who writes this letter on my behalf, has kindly consented to see me through my difficulties. Not knowing your address, I enclose this to Lord Hovingham to forward to you.

“ Signed by me,

“ LOUIS CAMBESI.

“ Prison,

“ Boulogne-sur-Mer.”

Agony, the dread of discovery, filled Joanna's breast with dismay, while the voice of Hovingham again asking her to explain and clear up the mystery struck like daggers upon her heart.

“ Forgive, oh ! forgive me if I am silent ; I will one day explain all. I am not to blame. As you love me, ask me no questions now ; I am innocent.”

At this declaration Hovingham stamped with his foot until the very walls seemed to shake; his indignation, his passion, carried him beyond all bounds. He clenched his fist, every threat of vengeance burst from his mouth against the man who had dared thus to sully the reputation of one he loved so much.

At last the storm of passion was exhausted, and it settled down into a calm.

"As for money to save that wretch, I would as soon chop off my hand as sign an order for it. But I'll consult Sharpness."

"Take my advice, dear Frank, and leave me to answer the wretch. If once the affair gets talked about my reputation would suffer. Think no more of this odious letter. We must forget all about it, Franky. It refers to a poor young friend of mine, who has bound me to keep her secret."

"Perhaps you are right," responded the weak Hovingham, who was so deeply infatuated with his cousin that he could not bring himself to believe anything detrimental to her.

Joanna, with a forced smile said—

“Let us be happy again. I will show you the answer I will send. Who could believe the world to be so wicked!”

She certainly did show Lord Hovingham an answer, in which she treated Louis's threats—regarding her friend, who was now beyond his reach—with scorn and as the raving of a madman; but that letter was committed to the flames. The answer she sent was an order for as much money out of her savings as she could lay her hand upon.





CHAPTER V.

Where Kensington, high o'er the neighbouring lands,
Midst greens and sweets, a royal fabric stands,
And sees each spring luxuriant in her bowers,
A snow of blossoms, and a wild of flowers,
The dames of Britain oft in crowds repair
To gravel walks, and unpolluted air ;
Here while the town in damps and darkness lies,
They breathe in sunshine, and see azure skies.

TICKELL.

THE Hovinghams had come to London for Mrs. Clarendon's *bal masque*, and as Mr. Melvill, who was suffering from severe indisposition, wished to be near his doctor, he and his ward had taken possession of their house in Harley Street. This threw Joanna and Hovingham constantly together ; for, under the plea of enquiring after Mr. Melvill's health, he was a constant daily visitor at his house.

Before leaving Riversdale he had, un-

known to his wife, purchased a horse for his cousin; not wishing to be seen in Hyde Park, he generally selected the Regent's Park for their morning rides, where the prying eyes of Chesterford in his daily stroll to the barracks often caught a glimpse of them.

One lovely morning in July, as Lady Hovingham entered the breakfast-room, the butler announced that the carriage was at the door.

"Who ordered it?" she asked.

"His lordship," replied the man.

Looking out of the window, she found that the barouche, with a pair of post horses, was at the door.

"How kind of him," she thought. "I know he expected tickets for Hurlingham, and this is meant as an agreeable surprise. A thousand thanks," cried Margaret, as she extended both her hands to Hovingham, who at that moment made his appearance.

"Margy, my dear," stammered out her husband, "the fact is, it's my cousin's birth-

day, and as you can always get tickets for Hurlingham, and as she is most anxious to see the polo match between my old corps and the Cavalry Household Brigade, I've promised to take her."

Lady Hovingham tried to hide her disappointment.

"I suppose, then," she continued, in a faltering tone, "we had better not dine till half-past eight."

"I should not like to keep you waiting my dear," he responded.

Strange it is, that whenever a husband wishes to say a disagreeable thing to his wife such as, "she had better go home, not a fit night to keep the horses out," or, "I'm engaged to dine with an old friend at the Marlborough," he universally interlards his conversation with "my dear," "my love."

Hovingham continued—"And as we may have some difficulty in getting away, I have ordered a quiet dinner for Joanna and myself there."

Lady Hovingham turned deadly pale, and

was about to leave the room, when her husband said—

“If you like to drive down to Greenwich with Harry Northam, I am sure he would be delighted to take you; the phaeton is at your service, and you might dine there. I’ll telegraph to the Trafalgar to order dinner.”

“Thank you very much,” replied Margaret, “but I prefer remaining at home. We were up rather late last night.”

At that moment Charley Chesterford made his appearance.

“Excuse,” said he, “a visit at this early hour; but I’ve brought Lady Hovingham and yourself tickets for the Orleans Club dance next Tuesday.”

“A thousand thanks,” he replied.

“By the way, Frank, I want you to tell me what you paid for that opera box at Her Majesty’s last Saturday. I took the next one, and they charged me eight guineas, declaring you had paid the same for yours.”

Hovingham was quite taken aback, for he had told his unsuspecting wife that he had

dined with an old brother officer at the "Rag," and had afterwards strolled into the Strand Theatre.

Not observing this, Chesterford continued—

"I hope Miss Melvill was pleased with the opera—Trebelli never sang better."

So now, to adopt a rather common but expressive phrase, "the cat was let out of the bag," and the dinner at the Army and Navy Club, and the stroll into the Strand Theatre, were in reality a dinner at the Pall Mall, and a box at the opera.

No longer able to restrain her feelings, Lady Hovingham, broken-hearted, left the room.

Shortly afterwards she heard the carriage drive off. Left to herself, she gave way to a flood of tears, and, pleading illness, told her maid she should remain in her room the best part of the day. Towards the afternoon a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the faithful Abigail, Simmons, informed her mistress that Captain Northam had called, but hearing her ladyship was ill, had merely left his card.

The day passed heavily away. Towards the evening Margaret pined for fresh air, so telling her maid Simmons she wished her to accompany her in her walk, prepared to take a stroll in the Park.

While watching the carriages which were blocking up the road between Apsley House and the Albert Memorial, Northam approached.

"I was sorry, Lady Hovingham, to hear, when I did myself the pleasure of calling this morning, that you were suffering from a violent headache. I trust it is better."

"Much better, I thank you."

Here the well-bred *femme de chambre*, feeling, as she afterwards remarked, that her company was not required, said with the most consummate tact—

"Please, my lady, I have some shopping to do; if I do not get the bugle trimming this evening I shall be unable to finish your dress for Lady Fanshawe's garden party."

"You had better remain," replied her mistress. "We shall have plenty of time to call in Sloane Street on our way home."

Accordingly the Abigail took a chair—at a respectable distance from those occupied by Lady Hovingham and Harry Northam.

While thus seated, and chatting in the most innocent manner, Charley Chesterford passed them on horseback, in company with the orderly officer who, having in the morning found him disengaged, had invited him to dinner.

“That’s a regular case,” said he, referring to Lady Hovingham. “I met his lordship driving down to Hurlingham. While the cat’s away the mice will play.”

“Don’t be severe, Charley,” said the gallant Life Guardsman. “Lady Hovingham is a model wife, and Harry Northam is like a pet dog in the family; besides, they say he is engaged to a Miss Clifford.”

“A blind. Well, we shall see.”

At dinner Chesterford enlarged upon the subject, thus spreading a report which eventually produced the most dire consequences.



CHAPTER VI.

In this ocean of pleasure, egad, there were tars,
Who ne'er passed the buoy of the Nore ;
There were soldiers, like Hymen, who knew not of wars,
Flocks of "Leicesters" you'd count by the score.

There were "Sunbeams" and "Fair Stars," resplendent,
not bright,
"Minervas" without sense or tongue,
And rosy-cheeked "Morning" and dark dreary "Night,"
"Do you know me?" was all said and sung.

Grave "Conjurors," too, who ne'er conjured before,
And "Harlequins" heavy as dross,
Impecunious spendthrifts, "Nabobs of Mysore,"
A *roué* as "John Kyrle" of Ross.

A plain "Marie Stuart," the loveliest of Queens,
A "blue-stocking," stout "Columbine,"
A flippant young "Juliet," scarce out of her teens,
And an elderly "Sappho divine."

The Masquerade.—W. P. L.

HORACE WALPOLE, in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, thus describes a masquerade given by the Duchess of Norfolk, in February, 1741 :—

“I must tell you how fine the masquerade of last night was. There were five hundred persons, in the greatest variety of handsome and rich dresses I ever saw, and all the jewels of London—and London has some!

“There were dozens of ugly Queens of Scots. The Princess of Wales was one, covered with diamonds, but did not take off her mask; none of the Royalties did, but everybody else. Lady Conway was a charming ‘Mary Stuart,’ Lord and Lady Euston man and woman Hussars. But the two finest and most charming masks were their Graces of Richmond, like ‘Harry the Eighth’ and ‘Jane Seymour,’ excessively rich, and both so handsome! Here is a nephew of the King of Denmark, who was in armour, and his governor, a most admirable ‘Quixote.’ There were quantities of pretty ‘Vandykes,’ and all kinds of old pictures walked out of their frames. It was an assemblage of all ages and nations. My dress was an ‘Aurengzebe;’ but of all extravagant figures, commend me

to our friend the Countess of Pomfret. She and my Lord trudged in, like pilgrims, with vast staffs in their hands, and she was so heated that you would have thought her pilgrimage had been, like Pantagruel's voyage, to the oracle of the Bottle. Lady Sophia was in a Spanish dress, so was Lord Lincoln, not, to be sure, by design; but so it happened. When the King came in, the Fausans, two celebrated comic dancers, were there, and danced an *entrée*."

By the above it will be seen that masquerades in Horace Walpole's time were very much as they are at the present time, though the remark he makes about dozens of ugly Queens of Scots are no longer applicable. Still, a great change has to be made before those who attend masquerades or fancy dress balls appear to thorough advantage. How often do we see a blonde appear as the Jewish maiden, Rebecca; how often does a dark-eyed beauty take the character of the "Fair Maid of Perth." Then, again,

we have ladies of low stature representing the dignified "Volumnia," or the stately "Queen Katherine," while those of higher and more majestic mien fancy themselves especially adapted for the rôles of "Ariel," "Fenella," or "Little Red Riding Hood." What, too, can be more ridiculous than a plain "Ninon de Lonilos," a dowdy "Anne Boleyn," an ill-featured "Juliet," a gawky "Sylphide," a *nez retroussée* "Roman maiden," or an antiquated "Ellen Douglas?" Nor are the men free from the above charge. We see striplings figuring as "Richard with the Lion's heart," or the Peruvian hero, "Rolla;" stout individuals, who might represent "Friar Tuck" or "Falstaff" to the life, don the costume of the love-sick "Romeo" or the gallant "Harry Percy;" attenuated youths aspire to the characters of "Bold Robin Hood" or the chivalrous "Ivanhoe;" overgrown hobbledahoys furnish pens of *sheepish*-looking "*Leicesters*;" men whose physiognomies are ever on the broad grin may be seen as the melancholy

“Jacques,” or the intellectual “Prince of Denmark;” while those of a staid, solemn countenance consider the characters of the lively “Spanish barber, Figaro,” or the witty “Touchstone” will suit their appearance admirably well. There are honourable exceptions, where the characters at masquerades are appropriately filled, and Turks, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, Russians, Tyrolese, Hungarians, North Americans, East Indians, Maltese, Dutch, French, Bavarians, Pachas, Slaves, Senators, Matadors, Nobles, Minstrels, Hussars, Squaws, Nabobs, Knight Templars, Sailors, Boors, intermixing with Sultanas, Flower Girls, Vivandières and Peasants, duly represent the national characters they undertake.

We have been led into these discursory remarks, which have been suggested, by the masquerade Mrs. Clarendon was about to give at their mansion in Bryanstone Square. This lady had read of several splendid masquerades that had been given by the leaders of fashion, and she longed to vie with them,

if not in the quality, at least in the quantity of her guests, and though she could not aspire for the presence of the loveliest Rose that was ever transplanted into this country, and which has taken such deep root in the hearts of her adopted countrywomen and men, a Princess of whom it may be truly said her "outward graces have been placed about the thoughts and counsels of her heart;" nor hope for the presence of one whose inexpressible union of dignity and affability at once indicates the noble mind of a Prince and the polished manners of a gentleman, still Mrs. Clarendon hoped, through the influence of some of her husband's political friends, aided by an aristocratic lady who was indebted to her for boxes at the Albert Hall and the Royal Opera, to get together a tolerable fashionable party.

The evening at length arrived, and no expense had been spared to render the *fête* perfect.

A temporary room had been erected, which was beautifully decorated and bril-

liantly illuminated, the recesses being filled with rare and costly exotics. This led to the garden, where sparkling lamps of every colour, placed round the flower-beds and among the trees and shrubs, gave the whole scene a look of fairy-land. The drawing-rooms were a blaze of splendour, wreaths of flowers were hung about in endless variety, with fountains of rose water emitting the most fragrant odour. Two bands poured forth their enchanting strains, and the long gallery was devoted to refreshments.

About half-past eleven the company began to arrive. It would, however, be uninteresting to describe the motley group. An exception, however, must be made in favour of a party in whom the reader may be interested—the Hovingham party, which consisted of Lord and Lady Hovingham, Lord and Lady Albert Wittingham, Miss Melvill, Miss Clifford, Captain Northam and Charley Chesterford.

It was arranged that the above group should break up into separate parties, so as

to enjoy the humours of the scene. Hovingham appeared as the "Grand Turk," not an inappropriate *rôle* for one who ruled so arbitrarily at home; Lady Hovingham was remarkably well dressed as "Night;" Sophia Clifford equally so as "Morning;" Lady Albert Wittingham was "Berengaria," wife of Richard Cœur de Lion; Lord Albert, "Hotspur;" Miss Melvill appeared in the flowing robe of a "Priestess;" Captain Northam a "Hungarian Hussar;" and Charley Chesterford, "Fra Diavolo."

After a time Lady Hovingham, fatigued with the ceremonious insipidity of many masks who addressed her, wandered with Harry Northam into the illuminated garden, where they were followed by a party of gipsies.

"Cross my hand with silver, my pretty lady," said one, "and I will tell you your fortune. Lady, you were born under an unlucky planet."

"Come along, Lady Hovingham," exclaimed Northam, impatiently.

“And you, young gentleman, are mixed up with the destiny of this young lady,” continued the gipsy.

“Let me hear,” said Lady Hovingham, “what she has to say.”

In a poetic strain the gipsy repeated the following lines:—

The star that o'er thy birth shone bright,
Now casts a dim uncertain light;
A threat'ning sky obscures its rays,
And shadows o'er thy future days;
Bereft of all that life holds dear,
Yet still too proud to shed a tear.

Then turning to Northam, she proceeded:—

And thou wilt share another's grief,
And only find in death relief.

“We've heard enough,” said Northam.

The gipsy party left them.

“I think I know that voice,” he continued; “yes, it must be Malice, and those lines are probably from her interesting drama ‘The Prisoner of Lochleven.’”

“Impossible,” said Margaret.

Northam was right—the gipsy was Miss Susan Clarendon. Miss Melvill had paired off with Chesterford, who, after walking some little time, left him for a few moments, as she said, to have her dress, which had been trod upon, pinned up. In vain he waited, but no priestess appeared, so he returned to the ball room.

Harry Northam had been “told off,” by Lord Hovingham, “to take care of his wife;” Miss Clifford was seized upon by young Baimbridge, splendidly got up as a Spanish Don; the Wittinghams each found a companion; and the Lord of Riversdale was left to himself. While wandering about, he was stopped by a character dressed as an Astrologer, who, bowing reverently to Hovingham, thus addressed him—

“Your star is about to set for ever—you have harboured a serpent who will turn and sting you—misery worse than death will follow. The knowledge of your destiny has been through many an anxious day and sleepless night the object of my enquiring

contemplation. See here." At this the Astrologer drew forth a mystic scroll, upon which certain hieroglyphic characters appeared. "Upon one side you will see the name of the treacherous foe who has alienated the affection of a wife from a too indulgent husband; on the other, the name of a true and disinterested friend."

"Keep me no longer in suspense," said the weak minded Hovingham.

"Read this—take the warning I give you."

To his horror he read the mystic paper. On one side appeared the name of Harry Northam, on the other Joanna Melvill. Before he could recover from his temporary stupor, the Astrologer had disappeared.

The reader will have probably guessed that the Astrologer was no other than Joanna Melvill. To account for her transformation, it will be remembered that she left Chesterford under the plea of having her dress pinned up, but another and stronger motive prompted her. Unknown to any one except

the costumier who furnished her dress, she had given orders to have the flowing Priestess's robe made in such a manner that it would serve a double purpose. The inside was to be of a dark colour, with mystic characters in gold and red upon black ground, and an Astrologer's cap was to be made of a light material that could easily be secreted in the flowing robe. No wonder, then, that she passed out of the ladies' room without attracting the notice of Chesterford, who she again joined in her original character within a few minutes after the warning had been given.

"What has happened, Mr. Chesterford?" she coolly enquired. "You could not have waited at the door for me."

"Indeed I did," responded Charley; "but 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' and as supper has just been announced, I hope you will permit the brigand, Fra Diavolo, to escort the Priestess of Diana to the supper rooms."

"We had better keep together," exclaimed

Hovingham; there's a table in the library that will just hold us all. But where's Lady Hovingham, I have not seen her since we first parted?"

"Oh," responded Charley, "I left her in a 'cool grot' in the garden; I fancy she was suffering from the heat of the ball room."

"And was Northam with her?"

"Yes; the noble Hungarian was listening to the fair representation of 'Night.' Quite a case of 'Young's Night Thoughts.'"

The mystic scroll flashed across his lordship's mind, and made him rather uneasy; but the soft tones of Joanna, the true and disinterested friend, soon restored him to equanimity.

Lady Hovingham and Northam now joined the party at the supper table.

"Did any of you fall in with an Astrologer?" asked Chesterford. "The impudent fellow accosted me, and foretold that through me a discovery would be made that would damage a fair lady's reputation, and expose a false friend."

Hovingham at this untoward remark positively turned green, but quaffing a bumper of champagne, exclaimed—

“If I fall in again with that star gazer, I’ll tear off his mask, for a more insolent scoundrel I never met.”

“He passed me in the garden,” said Northam, “in so tremendous a hurry that my spurs caught his robe, and tore off a portion of the cabalistic figures. He told me that happiness was in store for me, and that a fair lady’s smiles would reward my constancy.”

“Oh, give me the remnant,” said Joanna.

“No, no,” responded Northam; “I cannot part with it. I mean to keep it for good luck. Moreover, it may lead to the discovery of the Astrologer, and then Hovingham can have his revenge.”





CHAPTER VII.

The shrug, the hum, or ha ; these petty brands,
That calumny doth use.

SHAKESPEARE.

RETURN we to Riversdale, where, through Joanna Melvill's interest, a large party had assembled. It was one of those lovely spring mornings which brought to mind the description of Gavin Douglas, Bishop of Dunkeld, who flourished in the latter end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, thus modernised by Doctor Warton. The opening reminds one not a little of the novels and songs of "by-gone days," in which "Bright Phœbus," "Diana and her Nymphs," "The Thracian Huntress Harpalice" were brought conspicuously forward. "Fresh Aurora," writes the Bishop, "issued from her saffron bed and ivory house. She

was clothed in a robe of crimson and violet colour, the windows of her handsome hall overshadowed with roses and filled with balm. At the same time the crystal gates of heaven were thrown open to illumine the world. It was glorious to see the winds appeased, the sea becalmed, the serene firmament, the still air, and the beauty of the watery scene. The silver-scaled fishes in the gravel gliding hastily, as it were, from the heat, or seen through clear streams, with fins shining brown as cinnabar, and chisel-tails darted here and there. The new lustre, enlightening all the land, beamed on the small pebbles on the sides of the rivers and on the strands, which looked like beryl, while the reflection of the rays played on the banks in variegated gleams. The bladed soil was embroidered with various hues. Both wood and forest were darkened with boughs, which, reflected from the ground, gave a shadowy lustre to the red rocks. The glebe, fearless of the northern blasts, spread her broad bosom. The corn crops and the new-sprung barley

re-clothed the earth with a gladsome garment. The variegated vesture of the valley, clothed with cloven furrow, and the barley lands, were diversified with flowery weeds. The meadow was besprinkled with rivulets, and the fresh moisture of the dewy night restored the herbage which the cattle had cropped in the day. The blossoms in the garden trusted their heads to the protection of the young sun. Rank ivy leaves overspread the walls. The blooming hawthorn clothed all the thorns in flowers. The budding clusters of the tender grapes hung end-long, by their tendrils, from the trelices. The germs of the trees unlocking, expanded themselves into the foliage of Nature's tapestry. There was a soft verdure after balmy showers. The flowers smiled in various colours on the bending stalks; some red, others marked like the blue and wavy sea, specked with red and white, or bright as gold. The daisy embraided her little coronet. The grass stood embattled with banewort, the seeded down flew from the dandelion. Young weeds

appeared among the leaves of the strawberries and gay gilliflowers. The rosebuds, putting forth, diffused fragrance from the crisp scarlet that surrounded their golden seeds. Lilies, with white curling tops, showed their crests open. From every bed, scion, herb and flower bathed in liquid fragrance, the bee sucked sweet honey. The swan clamoured among the rustling reeds, and searched all the lakes and rivers where to build their nests. The red bird of the sun lifted his coral crest, crowing clear among the plants and bushes, picking his food from every path. The painted peacock, with gaudy plumes, unfolded his tail like a bright wheel enshrouded in his silver feathers, resembling the marks of the hundred eyes of Argus. Among the boughs of the twisted olive, the small birds framed the artful nest, or rejoiced with their merry mates in the tall oaks. In the secret nook, or in the clear windows of glass, the spider full busily wove her sly net to ensnare the gnat or fly. Under the boughs that screen the valley, or within

the pale-enclosed park, the nimble deer trouped in ranks, the harts wandered through the thick wood shaws, and the young fawns followed the dappled roes, and in the pastures and leas the lambs bleated to their dams. The ringdove coos in the tall copse; the starling whistles her varied descant; the sparrow chirps in the clifted wall; the goldfinch and the linnet fill the skies; the cuckoo cries; the quail twitters; while rivers, shaws, and every dale resound, and the tender branches tremble on the trees at the song of the birds and the buzzing of the bees."

All went well, when a circumstance occurred which was particularly well calculated to work upon Hovingham's mind. Among the visitors that had assembled, was Charley Chesterford, who, in the hopes of getting a still firmer footing at Riversdale, paid great court to the lady he looked upon as the reigning favourite. From him Joanna gleaned many trivial circumstances which greatly aided her plans. Chesterford mentioned having seen Margaret and Captain Northam in the

Park on the evening already referred to, "a decided case of 'smite' on the part of the gallant soldier," he said. "It was the talk in the smoking-room of the 'Rag' last week, how the Captain 'spooned' Lady Hovingham."

"He is an old friend of Frank's," responded Joanna.

"Friend!" exclaimed Charlie. "Is it not Shakespeare that says, 'friendship is constant in all other things save in the office and affairs of love,' and the 'Swan of Avon,' as they call him, had a pretty good insight into men's characters."

"But were they really walking together in the Park?"

"Oh, yes; and I often saw her last season driving in a hansom with him. As a friend, I tell you, the affair is very much talked about at the Clubs."

Shortly after this conversation, Hovingham received an anonymous letter warning him against a certain gallant Captain, who was constantly seen walking and driving with

Lady Hovingham in London. When reading this, he turned to Chesterford, who happened to be present, and, showing him the envelope, asked him if he could make out the post-mark.

“Quite unintelligible. It’s marked out.”

Hovingham walked across the room with long and measured strides, when, stopping suddenly short, he exclaimed—

“Can this be true? Little reliance can be placed on anonymous letters, still, this appears to be genuine.”

Charley, to adopt his own phraseology, felt that “there was something up.” He, however, waited in silence, till his host should explain himself further.

“Chesterford, be kind enough to read this.”

Charley read the letter, and, seeing that Hovingham was under the influence of some strong passion, replied—

“The effusion of some scoundrel, who thus stabs you in the back; commit it to the flames.”

“Stay ; pray tell me, have you heard anything lately about Lady Hovingham and Captain Northam ?”

“Not of late ; there was some foolish talk some weeks ago, but it died away.”

“I have been informed, not only by the writer of this letter, as you see, but by others, how truly I cannot say, that for some time rumours detrimental to Lady Hovingham’s character have been openly discussed at the London Clubs.”

“Such may have been the case, but certainly nothing of the sort has been said in my hearing.”

“Further, I am told, it has been asserted that Lady Hovingham has been in the habit of meeting Captain Northam clandestinely in the Park, Kensington Gardens and other places. Now, as you value my friendship, tell me whether you personally know this to be the case ?”

Although, perhaps, Chesterford valued Lord Hovingham’s dinners more than his friendship, and would feel greater annoyance

at the loss of the former than the latter, he had no alternative left him but to say that upon more than one occasion he had met them walking and driving together in hansom cabs. And on the particular day mentioned in this letter they were certainly walking together in Kensington Gardens.

“Really,” he added, “you ought not to be annoyed. Northam would not be guilty of so dastardly an act as to injure his liberal patron.”

The word liberal pleased Hovingham, and to do him justice we must remark that jealousy was foreign to his nature, that he struggled against its entrance and its growth. Though he only finally yielded, as will be shown, when a fatal combination of circumstances appeared to his weak mind as irresistible proofs of guilt, these circumstances, through the machinations of Joanna, following in rapid succession, began to work upon his mind, and, in spite of his former resolutions, roused him to suspicion.

“What say you ladies,” asked Hovingham,

at breakfast, "to a stroll and pic-nic in the woods? Those that prefer a carriage can have the barouche. It is a bright sunny day, we can form a sort of Zingari party, and enjoy our meal *al fresco*."

"How delightful!" exclaimed all the party.

"And as you, Joanna, understand pic-nics so well—for I never shall forget your description of one you arranged in the Campagna at Rome—must act the part of Queen of the Gipsies."

"Then I'll give orders about the luncheon," said Margaret, "you'll excuse me, Frank, to-day, my head aches, and I have many letters to write."

In a sudden fit of jealousy, Hovingham attributed Margaret's wish to remain at home to a desire to pass the day with Northam, who was to arrive with the Cliffords soon after breakfast; whereas the real cause of her depression of spirits was the additional affront her husband had [put upon her by appointing her rival the queen of the party.

No sooner had she given orders about the luncheon, than she retired to her *boudoir*, where she indulged in the most profound grief. Shortly afterwards her husband entered the room, and threw himself on a chair, with every mark of displeasure. She had lately observed, that taking any notice of him, particularly by speaking, when he was in one of these moods, never failed to draw from him some brutal answer, she therefore said nothing, but continued to occupy herself in arranging some flowers.

“So you have determined to stay at home?” he said, after some minutes of silence.

“Yes,” she replied, “I have a slight cold, and my head aches terribly.”

“Head ache! Heart ache perhaps!” he replied.

Margaret made no answer, but again busied herself with her flowers. Hovingham, provoked at her silence, started up and walked with a hurried step across the room; then turning suddenly to his wife, exclaimed with violent emphasis—

“ You dislike Miss Melvill. Do you not ? ”

“ Dislike ! ” she said.

“ Yes, you hate her ! ”

“ And has she not given me cause ? ”

“ What cause ? I should like to know, ”
he rejoined.

“ You need scarcely ask that question. Your conduct towards me since Miss Melvill first entered this house has been that of neglect.”

“ You imagine she has prejudiced me against Captain Northam ; such is not the case, and if it were, affection for me would have justified her in exposing so treacherous a friend.”

“ Treacherous ! ” she repeated.

“ Yes, treacherous ! ” cried Hovingham, “ I know who interests you more than all the world. You cannot hide it, you redden at the mention of his name. And mark me, if you encourage him or show any displeasure towards Miss Melvill while she is under my roof, the consequences, however disagreeable, will fall upon you ! ” He then rushed out of

the room, leaving Margaret filled with indignation at his cruel suspicions, and the threat respecting her future conduct towards the object of his present infatuation.

No sooner had Lord Hovingham left the room, than Margaret sought an interview with Miss Melvill, who she found finishing her toilet for the gipsy party. On being admitted she said that she wished to be alone with her. The maid was dismissed ; and then in the mildest manner she proceeded thus to address her—

“ You are mistaken, Joanna, if you consider me so mean, as to feel pain instead of pleasure at any attention paid to you by my husband. At the same time you must be aware that the world are apt to be very censorious ; his fair name is as dear to me as my own, I am therefore doubly anxious that no breath of scandal should sully it. I have ever considered the fame of a husband as reflecting honour on a wife—both should be held inviolably sacred.”

“ You are really too tiresome,” responded

Miss Melvill, petulantly. "I have already told you to speak to your husband, and not to worry me with your high flown notions about a husband's duty. Remember a wife has equal duties to perform, and as well may Frank be jealous of Captain Northam's attention to you, as you are of my cousin's attentions to me."

At this allusion to Captain Northam, Lady Hovingham's anger knew no bounds, and she replied with indignation—

"I now demand you to return home at the expiration of this week, and to promise me that you will not suffer my husband to call, or to carry on any correspondence with you."

After a moment's reflection Joanna calmly replied that an abrupt termination of the friendly intercourse between her cousin and herself would not only be injurious to her, but would bring down the very comments Lady Hovingham was anxious to avoid; therefore with every wish to please Margaret, she could not comply with her request.

"You refuse then," said Lady Hovingham, with quivering lips.

“Be calm, dear Margaret, the attachment I feel for my cousin,” continued Joanna, “is founded on pure friendship.”

“Listen,” said Margaret, “you profess friendship for my husband, yet how many a pang have you caused him. You profess affection for me, yet you plunge me into bitter despair.”

Here she burst into tears. Joanna felt that now was the moment to work upon Margaret’s feelings, so falling upon her knees, she seized her hand, kissed her affectionately, and promised faithfully to give her no further cause for annoyance. A temporary truce followed, and Miss Melvill was again triumphant. A cleverer actress never existed than Joanna Melvill. On arriving at Riversdale, she fully succeeded in her design of impressing Margaret with a lively admiration of her talents, and thus prevailed upon her to look over any lightness or frivolity of manner, which she said unfortunately had been instilled into her early life abroad.

Hovingham’s conduct to his wife had changed from neglect to brutality, he found

fault with all she did, swore at her, and committed every act short of personal violence. Affairs were going on in this miserable manner, when Charley Chesterford unintentionally let out that on the previous day Hovingham had been walking with Miss Melvill in a wood near the house of the latter. The act in itself might have been harmless, but for the first time Lady Hovingham found her husband guilty of falsehood, he having declared that he had not seen his cousin for three days. When accused of this, and asked why he should thus deceive her, he burst out into a fit of passion, raved and stormed like a madman.

Shortly afterwards Miss Melvill was announced, and Lady Hovingham found herself alone with the object of her distrust. Losing all control over herself, Margaret charged her with alienating her husband from her, of meeting him clandestinely.

“Dear Margaret,” responded the other, “do not make mountains of mole-hills. I see no harm in cousins meeting; your

jealousy blinds you, and you know in the case of your sister what evils may arise from it."

At this reference to Lady Albert, Margaret, whose pride was already deeply wounded, exclaimed—

"If you persevere in your conduct, you will drive me from my home."

"I hope not, dear cousin."

"You will drive me to desperation. As a loving wife, I appeal to you once for all to put an end to an intimacy which must end in misery."

"I do not understand you," said Miss Melvill, calmly.

"Promise me then that you will never again meet my husband clandestinely?"

Here Joanna put on a tragic look, and with well feigned anger indignantly interrupted Margaret with reproaches for supposing her so weak as to be in danger of being led into a violation of her duty; then recovering her composure, justified her conduct.

Treating these arguments with the disdain

they merited, Lady Hovingham burst forth—

“It is the duty of every right thinking man, and such a man my husband was, to screen all for whom he professes a friendship from the breath of suspicion, nor should he expose his own fair fame to the whisper of calumny.”

“Excuse me, if I retire. I did not expect to be thus insulted. No breath of suspicion can be brought against me, and permit me to say that your unreasonable jealousy of one who would be your friend is past all endurance.”

“Unreasonable jealousy!” echoed the now nearly distracted wife. “Have I no cause for it? but beware! Retribution is in the hand of Heaven alone; at the great day when before the Supreme Omnipotent Judge, our deeds are laid bare, while virtue exalted meets the all scrutinising eye of God—vice abashed will tremble at the just award of Providence.”



CHAPTER VIII.

All deception in the course of life
Is indeed nothing else but a lie
Reduced to practice and falsehood
Passing from words to things.

REV. R. SMITH.

Neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone.

MILTON.

MARGARET had abundant leisure to meditate upon every syllable of her conversation with Miss Melvill; as she retraced it calmly in her recollection, the retrospect was far from affording her comfort. Many little circumstances that had almost escaped her observation in the agitation of the moment, returned very forcibly to her memory, and threw a new light upon the view she had at first taken of the past. Her husband's behaviour had wounded her feelings not a little, and it

was agony to her to suppose it possible that he felt more than a cousin's affection for Miss Melvill; still, in spite of all her efforts to banish the feeling, it would frequently present itself to her imagination. This persuasion gave rise to many bitter regrets, and she was haunted with a thousand doubts and fears for the future.

At one time she felt much inclined to throw herself at her husband's feet and urge him to remove her suspicions; but there was an asperity, a something altogether in the tone in which he had spoken whenever his acquaintance with Miss Melvill was discussed, that checked the impulse.

For several hours she wandered about in the most secluded part of the grounds, meditating upon her wretchedness, and devising plans for her future conduct, before she could regain sufficient composure to meet Miss Melvill.

Shortly after this Joanna joined the party, and met Lady Hovingham as if nothing had occurred, merely expressing a hope that if

any angry word had escaped her lips it would be forgiven.

To avoid an open quarrel, Margaret expressed her forgiveness. Despite of this, the mutual dislike that existed between Margaret and Miss Melvill gave rise to a continual war of words, and though neither of them wished to carry matters to extremities, many very cutting and unpleasant things were said by both.

Of all the schemes that presented themselves to Miss Melvill's mischievous mind for sullyng the spotless character of Margaret, none appeared practicable. As a wife, she had been a pattern of fidelity and affection. Her conduct had ever been pure and irreproachable ; nor, on a retrospect of her life could a moment of levity be found which had left an unguarded opening for the attack of calumny.

The guilt which could not be imputed might, however, by a master stroke of policy, be inferred. By persuading Hovingham to shut his door against his wife, on the plea

that she had spread reports injurious to her character; by propagating scandal against her and Harry Northam, Joanna flattered herself it might be possible to make the world believe in Lady Hovingham's guilt; and this, though difficult to accomplish, was the only method she could devise for carrying out her wicked project.

While the seeds of hatred were thus ripening in the bosom of Joanna—for, since the day that Lady Hovingham had appealed to her husband to alter his conduct towards her, revenge and ambition became predominant in her character—she had already taken too many steps in the deep descent to be able to stop in her nefarious career, and hourly was she engaged in plans for carrying out her machinations. Cunning, which serves the wicked as a substitute for wisdom, taught her to elude discovery by the practice of a thousand arts, which seemed at the time to be crowned with success.

Hovingham was weak and easily led, and Joanna, who sighed for a new conquest, ob-

served with delight that he did homage to her all-powerful charms. To revenge herself was the first object of her wishes ; and next to that her great aim was to be admired. The vanity which led her to seek for admiration rendered flattery the most grateful offering to her heart.

Joanna, who had now thoroughly insinuated herself into the confidence of Hovingham, took every occasion, by seemingly inadvertent hints, to awaken his jealousy, and to represent to him the advisability of seeing less of Captain Northam, whose name had been so scandalously mixed up with that of his wife.

“For my part,” she said, “I have never observed the slightest levity on the part of dear Margaret, but the world will talk, and perhaps it was rather imprudent in her to be seen daily walking in the Park with her *cavalier servante*. Still, there could be no real harm in that.”

Jealousy was now again bursting forth, when Joanna continued—“Margaret’s char-

acter as a wife is irreproachable, but, alas, all women are naturally vain, and if she was flattered at Captain Northam's attentions, some excuse ought to be made for the weakness of our sex."

By such insinuations Miss Melvill kept alive the resentment against Northam, which had now taken deep root in Hovingham's breast, and his friendship for his former friend had turned into hatred. Gratified by the apparent zeal and perfect disinterestedness of his cousin, Hovingham lost no opportunity of attaching her still further to his interests. Knowing how anxious she was to appear with him in the hunting-field, he presented her with a splendid animal, which had nobly carried a fair huntress two seasons with the Quorn; gifts of dresses from Worth's in Paris; jewellery from Hunt and Roskell's were lavished on this unworthy favourite. Thus did she every day widen the breach between man and wife. Anonymous letters now poured in, warning Lord Hovingham

that "her ladyship was carrying on a clandestine correspondence with a certain Captain, who was constantly in the habit of meeting her during his lordship's absence." Some were couched in the language of regret and sympathy, others were in language coarse and vulgar.

It is an observation founded on a general survey of mankind, that those passions which, under the guidance of a strong mind, are most consistent with the dignity of human nature, when they assume absolute dominion over a weak one, tend most effectually to vilify and debase it. Such was the case with Joanna's love for Francis Hovingham. It is true that she had not yet proceeded so far down the declivity of vice as to avoid feeling shocked at the serious imputations against her character, which were now become too public to escape her penetration ; yet so strong was her infatuation for Lord Hovingham, that she contemplated how best she could get his marriage dissolved so

as to unite herself to him. A private consultation with Mr. Sharpness soon brought affairs to a climax.

For some weeks Mr. Melvill had been laid up with a violent attack of bronchitis, during which Joanna felt it to be her duty to remain with her guardian; and, as the mountain could not go to Mahomet, Mahomet was obliged to go to the mountain. Metaphor apart, as Joanna could not visit Hovingham, Hovingham visited her, and a bed was made up for him in the cottage. Day after day passed away, and no letter arrived for Margaret. Thus neglected, nothing could exceed her misery.

Weak as Hovingham was, and angry with his wife for the prejudice she entertained against his cousin, there were moments when, conscience-smitten, he would have taken Margaret to his heart of hearts. These were not lost upon Joanna. Finding that Hovingham was often loath to believe the scandal that she had by direct and indirect means propagated against his wife, and wish-

ing to bring forward "confirmation strong as Holy writ," she had recourse to a stratagem of the darkest hue, which no one except the most depraved could have for a moment contemplated. The post reached Riversdale at an early hour in the morning, when the letters were usually placed on the breakfast table. Anxious to pry into the secrets of the guests, this lady was in the habit of entering the room before the others had made their appearance, and upon more than one occasion had (by a process well-known to her, that of applying the steam of hot water to the adhesive gum), opened many letters. One morning her eyes recognised the hand-writing of Harry Northam addressed to Miss Clifford, and thinking that it probably contained a declaration of devotion and love, purloined the letter, ran to her room, opened it, and found it contained, in a most impassioned strain, an allusion to a meeting the week previous in the shrubbery. Cutting out the above paragraph, she dexterously placed it in an envelope which had contained a circular

directed to Lady Hovingham, and armed with this she waited her time, until Iago-like, she could more effectually work upon the feelings of Hovingham. The remaining portion of Northam's letter was torn up and thrown under the grate.

Joanna's scheme partly proved successful, for it so happened that Lord Hovingham appeared at the breakfast table before his wife, when Joanna, placing Northam's letter amongst those of her cousin's, trusted that he would inadvertently open all. He would probably have done so, had not Lady Hovingham entered the room, and, seeing her name to a letter in a good round tradesman's hand, took up the letter that was meant to have been read by her husband. Foiled in this attempt, Joanna took an early opportunity of asking Hovingham whether Captain Northam was coming to Riversdale, as she fancied she had seen a letter from him to Lady Hovingham. This created another scene, which added not a little to Margaret's grief. In vain she tried to settle her mind to

some employment. Reading, sketching, music, were all tried, and all equally failed. In the course of the afternoon, still occupied with dull thoughts, she proceeded to take a solitary ramble. Turning her steps through the wide woodlands that lay at the back of the mansion, she trod very nearly the same path which she had pursued with Frank Hovingham, on the first morning after their marriage. She traced the walk by the side of the river; a thousand flowers were on its banks, and the brightest sunbeams on its waters. But the feelings of her heart were changed; and the light which then Nature had borrowed from joy was now overshadowed by the clouds of care. As she gazed upon the stream, and the fell, wild banks, and the woods around her, and that the morning might bring tidings that would confirm her worst suspicions, the pain was too much, and she wept bitterly. Still she trod her way onward, pondering gloomily over her fate, when the train of her thoughts was suddenly broken. Passing through a green lane, on the hedges of

which grew the hawthorn and wild rose, she heard footsteps behind her, and turning round she was joined by Harry Northam.

"I merely called," said he, "to convey to you most joyful news. The appointment I told you of is likely to be confirmed, and there is every prospect of my being united to the only woman I ever loved."

"I congratulate you," said Margaret, extending her hand in the most tender manner, "and may every happiness attend you."

At this moment Hovingham galloped up.

"I hope I don't intrude," said he, with a sardonic smile. "So I've caught you out at last! I've long suspected your little game."

"What do you mean, my lord?" said Northam, with dignity. "Coward like, you may insult your wife, but if you dare to utter one word against my honour, the consequences, however disagreeable, will rest upon yourself."

"I've no time to argue the question," re-

sponded Hovingham, "henceforth our acquaintance ceases."

With this he put spurs to his horse, whether from fancying that the ash plant Northam held in his hand might be applied to his shoulders, deponent sayeth not. Thus a friendship of more than thirty years was broken up, and Hovingham and Northam were now bitter enemies. Little did the former think how sacred is true friendship, and how much it ought to be cherished. True friendship is the mutual esteem of two persons, wherein they are inclined through a disinterested affection to the support of each other in their happiness, welfare, distress and prosperity.

The formation, however, of such affection and esteem depends upon several concomitant circumstances. The contracting parties must have a similarity, if not in age and circumstances, at least in disposition, for friendship is a sacred thing, and deserves the tenderest acknowledgments. Such was Northam's feeling for the friend of his boyhood. Harmony

and temper begets and preserves friendship, but disagreeing inclinations are like false notes in music that serve only to offend the ear. A true and faithful friend is a living treasure, inestimable while we have him, and never enough to be lamented when he is gone.

There is nothing more ordinary than to talk of a friend, nothing more difficult than to find one. The proud, the vain, the selfish, the ostentatious, the triflers know no more of friendship than the name. During the sacred bond of friendship beware of listening to the tales of envious and malicious persons, never believe ought against your friend, unless you have demonstrative proofs of it from your own observation, and even in these be cautious. Through your whole conduct in life, be slow and cautious in forming friendship, but much more slow in breaking them. Had it not been for the baneful influence of Joanna Melvill, Hovingham would never have brought himself to believe that his friend could act dishonourably towards him.

No sooner had Margaret reached home than she flew to her husband, and throwing herself upon her knees, wildly exclaimed—

“They wish to ruin me,” she said, “to tear me from your affection, to make you think me vile, to accuse me, not of jealousy, but crime.”

Hovingham was inexorable, he rushed towards the door. She followed, clinging to him, she held his hand in hers, he tore himself rudely from her clasp; he fled, and she fell senseless before him. Still he heeded not, but rushing from her presence, sought Joanna, and ordering the carriage, left his home without leaving his address.

A few days after the above interview, Lady Hovingham was served with a legal notice that her husband was about to commence proceedings against her in the Divorce Court. A thunder-bolt could not have more completely stunned her than this unexpected blow. The die was cast, nothing was left for the unfortunate wife but to wait patiently for the coming trial, which she fervently

prayed might not long be deferred. She pined for the time when her innocence would be proclaimed through the breadth and length of the land. She had been the object of persecution by her unrelenting enemies, calumnies of every description had been heaped upon her devoted head, vice had hitherto triumphed over virtue, still she would not shrink from any earthly tribunal, trusting to a higher tribunal for justice to the oppressed.

While Margaret, turned away from her husband's doors, and without a penny in the world, had to seek a home with her relatives, those who had been the cause of all her misery were enjoying all that wealth could promise for them at Riversdale. Yet Hovingham was unable to close his eyes at night, and had recourse to stimulants by day, while he brooded on future plans of revenge. Since his acquaintance with Miss Melvill his expenditure had greatly increased, and the knowledge that to carry his suit into court would cost thousands, in addition to the

alimony to be awarded Lady Hovingham *pendente lite*, so completely roused his temper that he was more like a mad man than a sane being.

To meet the above, and what he falsely termed his wife's former reckless extravagance, he ordered timber to be cut down, and the farm leases whenever they fell in to be raised.

The local newspapers were now full of this *cause célèbre*. No previous event in the county produced a greater amount of popular excitement, or furnished a more abundant crop of latest particulars.

Ovid writes—


Donee cris felix multos numerabis amicos ;
Nullus ad amissas ibit amicus opis.

Those who the various gifts of fortune gain,
A thousand fawning, flattering friends obtain ;
But if the goddess frowns, those friends no more
Regard the idol they ador'd before.

And the above lines were fully realised in the persons of former friends and acquaintances of the Hovinghams, and Miss

Melvill was not long in perceiving that public opinion was very strong against her and Lord Hovingham. All his relations deserted him, some inventing trifling excuses for not availing themselves of his proffered hospitality, others openly giving reason for their rupture. Not a lady in the neighbourhood would visit Miss Melvill, and those that had formerly known her only gave her a formal curtsy. The Vicar of the parish had appealed to his patron to put an end to the scandal by restoring Lady Hovingham to her former position, and no longer to allow Miss Melvill to reign paramount in his house.

A certain number of young men from London continued to visit at Riversdale, giving as their reason, that, after all, Hovingham was not worse than his neighbour, that Miss Melvill was "a jolly girl," and that if she had got into a mess, so long as she was clever enough not to be found out, what signified; while others gave a truer reason, namely, that Hovingham's cook was a *Cordon*



bleu, that his wine was faultless, that his covers were well stocked with game, and that a pack of hounds were within an easy distance. One young fellow, when told he ought to stand by the weaker sex and show his abhorrence of Hovingham's conduct by dropping his acquaintance, replied—

“ I never mix myself up with family broils, and as the shooting at Riversdale is No. 1, letter A, the cook equal to Francatelli, and the champagne and claret the best Kingscote and Chapman can furnish, I shall nail my colours to the mast and stick to the ship.”

We must now return to the Cliffords who were much occupied in discussing two important affairs, one as to the day upon which Harry Northam was to be united to Sophy Clifford—this was being carried on between the heads of the family—the other was the preparation of the *trousseau*, which occupied the attention of the young lady and her female friends. While thus occupied the letters and newspapers were brought in and a rush made for the *Morning Post*.

"Why, what do I see?" cried Sophia, turning pale as death. "It cannot be true."

"Let me have the paper," said Mr. Clifford." In the meantime Sophia, with tears in her eyes had left the room.

"Read it, my dear," exclaimed Mrs. Clifford.

"We understand that Lord Hovingham has commenced proceedings in the Divorce Court; Lady Hovingham and Captain H. Northam, co-respondent."

"I'll not believe it," continued Mrs. Clifford, "for a purer creature than Lady Hovingham never existed, and Northam is the soul of honour."

A letter from Northam declaring his innocence, but confirming the report, put an end to the preparations for his marriage. Sophia, though loath to believe that the object on whom she had garnered up her soul was guilty of such treachery, tried in vain to drive from her mind the most painful misgivings. Upon more than one occasion Miss Melvill

had raised her jealousy by hints as to Harry Northam's constancy, and innuendoes respecting his devotion to Lady Hovingham ; when a letter, most ingeniously worded, in which Joanna in the most hypocritical terms expressed her heartfelt regret that the evidence against Lady Hovingham was conclusive, seemed to confirm the fatal news Miss Melvill added—

“Poor Frank is wretched. He would have saved his wife this exposure had it not been for the fact that for many years her name has been mixed up with that of Captain Northam, unknown to him, but also too well known in the county.”





CHAPTER IX.

Fair Queen of Lakes neglected long,
Unhonour'd in Ausonian song,
Yet not the wave that Dian loves
O'erhung by Nemi's nodding groves,
Nor bright Blandusia rais'd so high
In Flaccus strain with thee can vie.

And while I cast my eyes around,
They yet shall stray o'er classic ground,
For here Rousseau's expressive power
Commands the visionary hour;
The well-mark'd scenes his tale renew,
And Fancy fondly thinks it true.

PARSONS.

MISFORTUNES seldom come singly, and this truism was fully realised in the person of the ill-fated Margaret Hovingham. Time, which does wonders, had in some degree roused her from the lethargy in which the cruel conduct of her husband had placed her, and she was more herself when a telegram announced to her the severe illness of her

father at Geneva. Losing no time in making arrangements for the journey, she travelled day and night until she reached that lovely spot.

At the entrance of the Grand Hotel, Beau Rivage, she was met by Mr. Charleville's faithful servant, who, with tears in his eyes, informed her that his master was still in danger, but that the doctors had given some hope that his life might yet be spared.

"Perfect quiet is necessary," continued the man; "but Dr. Bouveret will be here in less than two hours, and if your ladyship will lie down, or take some refreshments, I will inform you the moment he arrives."

The two hours appeared like half a day. At length Dr. Bouveret was announced.

"I have better news for you, Lady Hovingham," said this kind-hearted medical man. "Your father has had a very refreshing sleep, and is decidedly better. I have ordered him some arrowroot and brandy, and if you will forgo the pleasure of seeing

him this night, I trust to-morrow morning he will be well enough to see you. For his sake, then, dear lady, and yours, let me urge you to take some refreshment and then retire early to bed. As yet neither Mr. nor Mrs. Charleville are aware of your arrival."

Cheered with this news Lady Hovingham followed the doctor's advice, and after partaking of a slight repast strolled through the garden, and, having engaged a boat, passed a few hours on the unruffled waters of the beautiful lake.

At an early hour on the following day her mother entered her room with a countenance beaming with joy.

"Your dear father," she exclaimed, as she pressed her daughter to her arms, "has had a good night, and Dr. Bouveret hopes that in a fortnight he will be sufficiently recovered to undertake the journey home."

Thanks to a good constitution, Mr. Charleville rallied so rapidly that in a few days he was well enough to accompany his wife and daughter in excursions on the lake to Vevay

Chillon, Ouchy, Lausanne, Clarens, Villeneuve, Geneva, Coppet, Ferney, and other interesting places immortalised by Byron. The Château at Chillon had great charms for Margaret; she felt with the author of "Childe Harold"—

Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace,
Worn as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard! May none those marks efface,
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

She referred to the early history of this Castle, which, according to Tennant, is involved in doubt. By some historians it is said to be built in the year 1120, and, according to others, in the year 1236, but by whom it was built seems not to be known. It is said, however, in history, that Charles the Fifth, Duke of Savoy, stormed and took it in 1536; that he there found great hidden treasures, and many wretched beings pining away their lives in these frightful dungeons, amongst whom was the good Bonnivard.

On the pillar to which this unfortunate man is said to have been chained, may be seen cut on the stone the name of one whose beautiful poem has done much to heighten the interest of this dreary spot, and will perhaps do more towards rescuing from oblivion the names of "Chillon" and "Bonni-
vard" than all the cruel sufferings which that injured man endured within its damp and gloomy walls.

Clarens ! sweet Clarens ! birthplace of deep Love !
Thine air is the young breath of passionate thought ;
Thy trees take root in Love ; the snows above
The very glaciers have his colours caught,
And sunset into rose-hues sees them wrought
By rays which sleeps there lovingly ; the rocks,
The permanent crags, tell here of Love who sought
In them a refuge from the worldly shocks,
Which stir and sting the soul with hope that woos, then mocks—

Clarens ! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod—
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne
To which the steps are mountains ; where the god
Is a pervading life and light—so shown
Not on those summits solely, nor alone
In the still cave and forest ; o'er the flower
His eye is sparkling, and his breath hath blown
His soft and summer breath, whose tender power
Passes the strength of storms in their most desolate hour—

All things are here of *him*, from the black pines,
Which are his shade on high, and the loud roar
Of torrents, where he listeneth to the vines
Which slope his green path downward to the shore,
Where the bow'd waters meet him, and adore,
Kissing his feet with murmurs ; and the wood,
The covert of old trees, with trunks all hoar,
But light leaves, young as joy, stands where it stood,
Offering to him and his a populous solitude.

A populous solitude of bees and birds
And fairy-formed, and many coloured things,
Who worship him with notes more sweet than words,
And innocently open their glad wings,
Fearless and full of life ; the gush of springs,
And fall of lofty fountains, and the bend
Of stirring branches, and the bud which brings
The swiftest thought of beauty, here extend,
Mingling, and made by Love, unto one mighty end.

As I am about to introduce my readers to the above lovely spot, I have quoted largely from Byron, whose stanzas have everything which makes a picture of local and particular scenery perfect. Although a lover of nature, an admirer of beauty, and one who had seen some of the noblest views in the world, neither the music of the shepherd, the crashing of the avalanche, nor the torrent, the mountain, the glacier, the forest, nor the cloud for one moment lightened the weight

upon the poet's heart ; nor, as he feelingly describes, enabled him to lose his own wretched identity in the majesty, and the power, and the glory, around, above, and beneath him.

Such was the case with Margaret Hovingham, who, though she roused herself to exertion, felt that her father's life hung on a thread, and that another attack must prove fatal.

When Mr. Charleville's health improved, the party visited Ermenonville, and saw the room in which Rousseau died ; heaving a sigh at the vanity of human life, they withdrew from the spot. Upon entering the gardens they passed through a gate, which, upon a pedestal, was the following inscription by the Marquis de Girardin :—

Le jardin du bon ton, l'usage
Peut être Anglois, François, Chinois ;
Mais les eaux, les près, et les bois,
La nature et le paysage
Sont de tout temps, de tout pays ;
C'est pourquoi, dans ce lieu sauvage
Tout les hommes seront amis,
Et tout les langages admis.

They then made a pilgrimage to the tomb of l'Homme de la Nature et de la Vérité. Proceeding from thence they crossed the lake to the Ile de Gabrielle, and saw the tower, named after the Charmante Gabrielle, and the Château d'Ermenonville, which formerly belonged to Henry IV. It was the scene of that monarch's love for the fair sister of Francis Annibal D'Estrées. What reflections were awakened in their breasts, when they remembered that for love of her the King embraced the Roman Catholic religion, divorced his wife Marguerite de Valois, and the retribution that followed in the sudden death of the monarch's favourite, the ill-fated Gabrielle.

In thus quoting largely, as I have done on more than one occasion, I feel that I lay myself open to censure; still, I have authority for the course I have pursued. There can be no doubt in quotations, as in all other things, men have run into extremes; many writers have so indulged in them in order, as it would seem, to make an ostentation of

learning. La Mothe le Vayer, whose beautiful thoughts and solid arguments cause him to be ranked nearer Plutarch than any other French writer, thus denounces the class I have above alluded to. "*Dieu vous fosse la grace de derevir moins scavant,*" and John de la Bruyere animadverts strongly against books being crowded with quotations, as to be hardly anything else. On the other hand, it has been truly said, "That many pleasing as well as useful purposes may be served by quotations, judiciously made and aptly applied; and that the things thus borrowed have not only all the energy of their old situation, but all the graces of invention in their new one, and why should they not?" "There being no less wit in justly applying the thought of another than in being the first author of that thought." Few, however, will endorse the last opinion of Baylis.

* * * * *

It was a lovely summer's evening, the sun was beginning to sink beneath the deep blue

mountains, and the red and slanting rays fell brightly on the placid waters of the lake; there, in the calm and stillness of the evening, sat Margaret Hovingham. She gazed upon the beauty around her, and recalled with the vividness of reality dreams of her youth and the varied scenes of her past life. Suddenly she was startled from her reverie by the approach of a footstep; she looked round, and Harry Northam stood before her.

After a friendly greeting, she expressed her surprise at seeing him, which he soon accounted for by saying his motive was to see Mr. Charleville, and urge him to plead his cause with Mrs. Clifford.

"My father is still far from well," replied Margaret; "any sudden excitement might be attended with fatal consequences. I will break to him your arrival, and to-morrow you can speak to him upon the subject that has brought you here. You have my fondest wishes for the success of your mission."

While thus engaged, a quiet-looking man,

dressed in a sober suit of black, approached and sat down on a bench close to the one they occupied.

“I believe I have the honour of addressing Lady Hovingham?” he said.

Lady Hovingham replied in the affirmative.

“And may I take the liberty of asking how the Reverend John Charleville is? I have often listened to his eloquent discourses.”

“I thank you much, my father is much better; so much so, that we shortly hope to be able to return home.”

Bowing respectfully, the stranger took a note-book from his pocket and employed himself apparently copying a route from “Bradshaw’s Continental Guide.”

“You know,” said Northam, “how intense my love is; it has stood the test of time, and proved, in my instance at least, the truth of the French saying:—

*L'absence c'est à l'amour ce qui est au feu le vent,
Il éteint le petit, il augmente le grand.*

“Yes,” responded Margaret, “and happily it is reciprocated. May every obstacle shortly be removed.”

“And see,” proceeded Harry, “this engaged ring, which I hope shortly to see placed by the side of one of even more intrinsic value ;

Love slights all gold except the wedding ring,

as I used to say when we acted the *Heir at Law* at the garrison theatricals at Winchester.”

“It is now getting late, so we had better go in. You remember the lines of Lord Chesterfield—

The dews of the evening most carefully shun
They're the tears of the day for the loss of the sun.”

“I must now go and see that my father has his tea, and will then join you in the drawing-room ; as I dine early with him, I always have a light supper about nine o'clock ; will you join me ?”

“Willingly. So adieu for the present,”
During supper the conversation still turned

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upon Sophia Clifford, and Lady Hovingham, elated with the promise her father had made her of addressing a few lines to Miss Clifford, exclaimed—

“All, all will be well ; your constancy will be rewarded, and two loving hearts will be united never again to part. How strange it is,” said Margaret, “that our mysterious friend still haunts us ; I observed him on the sofa close to us in the drawing-room, and he has now only just left the table next to ours.”

“Oh, he’s a T. G., a travelling gent, who has a month’s holiday. By his appearance I should take him for a Methodist parson ; or, perhaps, by his enquiring after your father, he may be a lay preacher.”

Soon after this they retired, and as they stepped out of the lift to the landing on the second floor, the supposed lay preacher was there, who respectfully wished them good-night, and then entered his room, the door of which he left ajar.

Many ladies have a weakness for lingering

at their doors, many of whom feel with Juliet that "parting is such sweet sorrow, that they could say good-night till it be to-morrow;" others do it from habit, having lots of little nothings to say even to their female friends. Certainly Lady Hovingham was not an exception to the above rule, for she remained some minutes with her hand upon the door in earnest conversation with Northam, who was still harping on his beloved Sophia.

The conversation in the garden, in the drawing-room, at the supper-table, and in the passage had been duly noted down by Mr. Hawksford, of the London Inquiry Office, who had been despatched by Lord Hovingham to watch Captain Northam's movements. This clever detective had travelled down with Northam in the same railway carriage from London to Folkestone, had crossed in the same boat, accompanied him from Boulogne to Paris, followed him in a *fiacre* from one station to the other, and never lost sight of him until they reached Geneva. There,

having ascertained that Northam had driven to the Grand Hotel Mr. Hawksford went to a small inn in the town, where he changed his dress from that of an East-end of London swell to that of a sedate lay preacher, got rid of his light-coloured wig, whiskers and moustache, replaced his wide-awake hat for one of a clerical shape, and in this new garb appeared, as has already been said, at the Grand Hotel, Beau Rivage.

His telegram to his employer ran as follows :—

“ Evidence conclusive ; both parties here. More by letter.”

The letter contained all, and a little more than the detective had heard, and Hovingham, in a letter to his lawyer, Mr. Sharpness, thanked him for his valuable suggestion of having Captain Northam's movements watched, and enclosed a cheque for a hundred pounds on account, Mr. Hawksford charging

five guineas a day, exclusive of travelling and hotel expenses.

Mr. Hawksford's letter to his noble employer ran as follows :—

“ Geneva, August 4th, 187—

“ MY LORD,—

“ I never lost sight of the Captain from the time he left Charing Cross, until I saw him established in the Grand Hotel, Geneva; there he was met in the garden by Lady H ——, evidently a preconcerted plan. I noted down every word they uttered, and have furnished the same to Mr. Sharpness. They sat for at least an hour in the garden, then walked about in the shady walks until after dusk, then sat in a corner by themselves in the drawing-room, supped together, and had a long and tender interview in the corridor, near their respective apartments. I remained as long as I could watching their proceedings, but as a robbery had recently been committed in the hotel, and as the night

porter eyed me with a suspicious look, I was obliged to keep in my bedroom after the two had apparently separated for the night. No sooner had the Captain left his room than I went in, and thinking he might have written a few lines to Lady H —, I inspected his blotting book, tore out a sheet, which I enclose, where you will be able to trace the following lines, which fully confirm what I heard in the garden, and during supper—the words, ‘beloved,’ ‘mine, for ever mine,’ ‘blissful hour;’ are quite distinct, ‘your own devoted Harry,’ is slightly blotted. I have requested Mr. Sharpness to send you at once a copy of the letter I forwarded to him. In it I omitted the French lines, which, not understanding the language, I copied as the Captain pronounced them; you, my lord, will be able to know their exact meaning; they were uttered in a very affectionate tone:—
‘Labsense sate ar lammor sir ke ate on feu
ler vant, ill ettaint le petite, il ogmente le
grand.’ I hope, in the course of the day, to square the man that attends the family, and

will keep a sharp eye on the parties until they return to England, which, I hear from Mr. C's servant, will be shortly.

“I remain your lordship's

“Very obedient servant,

“SAMUEL HAWKSFORD.”

The doctor now pronounced that Mr. Charleville was sufficiently recovered to undertake his journey to England, and in a few days after the announcement the family left Geneva.





CHAPTER X.

Placidâque ibi demum morte quievit.

VIRGIL.

There calm at length he breathed his soul away.

No sooner had Mr. Charleville returned to Rylston Rectory than he was seized with a paralytic stroke, which, in less than eight-and-forty hours, terminated fatally. His end was peace—calmly resigning his spirit to Him who gave it, and, taking an affectionate leave of his sorrowing wife and children, breathed his last.

By his own express desire he was borne to his grave in God's acre, upon the shoulders of his dependents, and a more remarkable expression of universal respect was never shown to any man than was exhibited on the occasion of his funeral, the remembrance of which lingered long in the hearts of his

parishioners, an evidence that they knew how to mark their estimate of Christian virtue and social merits. It was not alone the parishioners who mourned the loss of a man whose one earnest purpose, whose one unswerving practice, through an extended and valuable life, had been to do the thing that was right—right in purity, right in honour, right in justice, right in generosity; for the grief was universally felt by all—high and low, rich and poor. One of the salient points in Mr. Charleville's character was that high, straightforward sense of honour which held in detestation all that was mean, or even doubtful in its professed motives. He gave fearless expression to such feelings, and if occasionally, there was found a severity in his manner, it was but the outburst of that downright sincerity, which was not only overlooked without a shadow of resentment, but even respected as an evidence of the honesty of his nature; and yet, with all his personal purity, he was anything but a hard judging person. Pro-

vided only that religion was not slighted, morality not outraged, and integrity not violated, he was lenient to error, and made allowance for the shortcomings of others. In truth, he was in every sense a large-hearted man. In conclusion, John Charleville died as he had lived. When the last day did arrive, it did not find him unprepared. Though he had always "made a conscience of his ways," though few men could show more purity of life, and fewer still point to more charitable good works, yet he utterly discarded any claims grounded on such a foundation. With true humility, and trustful hope in the merits and sacrifice of his Saviour, he looked forward for acceptance at the throne of Him in whose presence all is joy and gladness, and sighing and sorrow flee away. His last thought was—

Jesus, my Lord, I look to Thee,
Where else can helpless sinners go?
Thy boundless love shall set me free
From all my wretchedness and woe."

When men like the Reverend John Charleville die, they dispel the gloom and almost

show the King of Terrors fair and beautiful.
That Power

Whom soft-eyed Pity once led down from Heaven,
Smooths the last bed with pious hope and joy ;
Then props feeble nature, calms all her fears,
Wakes all her hopes, and animates her faith,
Till the rapt soul, anticipating Heaven,
Bursts from the thralldom of incumb'ring clay,
And on the wing of ecstasy unborne,
Springs into liberty, and light, and life.

Sad, however, were Margaret's feelings as she moralised on death, from whose rapacious hands none can escape.

Smiling infants, the pride of their mother's hearts, to-day full of life and joy, to-morrow sicken and die. Young men, exulting in strength and youth, and spirits, with the world all before them, and maidens, full of innocent mirth and hope, like the early buds in spring are nipped by some untimely frost, wither and die. Men who have arrived at a green old age, whose strength of constitution has withstood the attacks of illness, yet find that the original sentence, "Thou shalt surely die," cannot be stayed. All go down to the grave—dust to dust, ashes to ashes.



CHAPTER XI.

The Charge is prepared, the lawyers are met,
The judges all ranged (a terrible show).
I go undismayed.

GAY'S *Beggar's Opera*.

A rotten case abides no handling.

SHAKESPEARE.

The lawyers did their utmost for divorce.

BYRON.

THE following dialogue between Hermogenes and Cicero will best describe the injured and innocent wife's feelings. I quote from Angus Burke, who wrote in the year MDCCLVII. :—

HERMOGENES :—

Full well you know
The sentence is gone forth, and thou shalt stand
A fiery trial. Thy accusers hold
Close consultation, and the time is fixed
When the Court sits to hear the heavy charge.

SOCRATES :—

Know then, my friend, if innocence can plead
A righteous cause, I am prepared to stand
The strictest scrutiny. For my whole life
Alone is my defence.

HERMOGENES :—

. Judges by persuasive acts
Of eloquence misled, do oft acquit
The greatest criminal; as oft condemn
The innocent.

SOCRATES :—

. Let rage discharge
The hottest bolts, I can sustain the shock
Intrepid and unmov'd.

The *cause célèbre* must now attract our attention.

At an early hour on the morning of the 20th of June, 18—, Westminster Hall was crowded, and it was quite clear to any casual visitor that a *cause célèbre* was on the list. The entrance to the Divorce Court was surrounded long before the doors opened by persons anxious to be admitted. A few fortunate individuals contrived, by the use of a *silver* or *golden* key, to get admittance, and when the doors were opened, what with barristers, solicitors, solicitors' clerks, and the chosen few, the Court was completely crowded.

The case to be heard was "Hovingham *v.* Hovingham and Northam." Shortly before

ten o'clock, Serjeants Scruton and Bramley, Q.C., Mr. Flaxton, Q.C., and their junior, took their seats nearest the witness box. Sir Frederick Wensley, Mr. Haswell, Q.C., and a junior (Mr. Thornby) were retained for the defence; Sir John Henwick appeared for the co-respondent. The solicitor, Mr Sharpness (from the firm of Sharpness, Bosham and Scroby), sat by the side of Lord Hovingham. Mr. Tinsley, at the furthest end of the bench, placed himself next Captain Northam, being the legal adviser of both respondents. Lady Hovingham, accompanied by a host of female friends, was accommodated with a seat near the Bench. All eyes were turned upon her, and a more modest, guiltless-looking lady never appeared in that Court.

"Silence ! hats off !" exclaimed the usher.

All rose, and the President took his seat.

In opening the case, the learned counsel made some general remarks on the breach of the seventh commandment, pointing out the baseness of a familiar friend abusing the

rights of hospitality, thus bringing shame and sorrow on a poor misguided woman. In this harangue Serjeant Scruton indulged in an unbounded fluency of words, which led him into unnecessary amplification, and his arguments did not possess the slightest method. *Lucidus ordo* was certainly not the merit of his eloquence; the attention was jaded by a verbosity which confused the memory instead of instructing the mind. But how different was the clear, the well-adapted language of Sir Frederick Wensley, who spoke for the defence; a desire to amplify never led him to involve himself in words; at the same time perspicuous method gave such a clue to the attention of the jury, that the principles on which he reasoned, as well as his application of them, remained fixed in their memory.

Serjeant Scruton evidently felt the weakness of his case; in fact, as he sat down, he whispered to a valued friend—

“I’ve done the best I could in such a frivolous case.”

Witnesses were called, who contradicted one another; one, a flyman, swore to driving the co-respondent with Lady Hovingham at a time that lady was miles off. Another swore that he “zeed ’em walk together.” The above witnesses were denounced by Sir John Henwick as perjurers of the deepest dye.

The examination of one witness caused great merriment in the Court. Jem Wagstaff, a tiger of very diminutive growth, was placed in the witness-box by the counsel for the prosecution.

“ You lived in the service of Lord Hovingham, I believe ? ”

“ I did.”

“ How long ? ”

“ Little better than a year.”

“ During the time you were in Lord Hovingham’s service did you ever see Captain Northam ? ”

“ Often.”

“ Upon one occasion did you overhear a conversation with him and Lady Hovingham in a retired part of the Castle ruin ? ”

"I did."

"State to the best of your memory what it was."

"The Captain called her a sweet saint, wished himself a glove upon her hand that he might touch her cheek, said there was a deal of peril in her eyes, swore something about the moon, talked a deal about love and parting, and she said she blushed for what she had heard him say."

"You may step down."

"One moment," said Mr. Haswell. "Did you leave Lord Hovingham's service on your own account?"

"No."

"Were you dismissed?"

"I was."

"For what reason?"

"Her ladyship complained to my lord that I was drunk one afternoon, but I was as sober as a judge" (loud laughter).

"Silence!"

"Were you in the servants' gallery at the amateur play at Mrs. Clarendon's?"

“ I was.”

“ Do you remember whether the words you heard in the ruins of the Castle were the same that Captain Northam delivered in the scene from ‘ Romeo and Juliet ? ’ ”

“ They were.”

“ And to whom were they delivered ? ”

“ To Miss Clifford.”

“ Now on your oath do you still swear that it was Lady Hovingham and not Miss Clifford who you overheard in the ruin ? ”

“ I believe it was her ladyship.”

“ I have nothing to do with your belief—do you swear it ? ”

“ Well, I may have been mistaken.”

“ Now would it surprise you to hear that on that very day Lady Hovingham was miles away from Riversdale ? ”

“ I may be mistaken, but the voices were very much alike.”

“ I’ve no further question to ask.”

A letter was then put in, the handwriting of which was admitted by his counsel to be that of Captain Northam. It ran as follows—

“Never shall I forget the happy hour I passed with you last Tuesday, and I sigh for the day when I can call you my own.

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofan'd by a tear,
That the fervour and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear!
No, the heart that has truly lov'd never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns on her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turn'd when he rose.

“Never shall I forget the way you sung the above lines.

“Ever and affectionately yours,

H. N.”

Captain Northam was then sworn, and examined by Mr. Flaxton.

“You admit the handwriting?”

“I do.”

“The letter I hold in my hand was addressed to Lady Hovingham?”

“Not by me. It was addressed to Miss Clifford, Riversdale.”

“Strange that it should come into Lord Hovingham's hands.”

“The letter I wrote to Miss Clifford, to whom I was engaged, occupied the whole of a sheet of note paper. The scrap you have read was a postscript, and has evidently been torn off the original.”

“Now, sir, remember you are upon your oath. Do you swear that this letter was written to and directed to Miss Clifford?”

“Most solemnly do I swear that it was written to Miss Clifford and directed to her.”

At this the Queen’s Counsel and Mr. Sharpness looked what is more expressively than elegantly called “flabbergasted.” Mr. Flaxton sat down.

“Captain Northam,” said Mr. Haswell, “you have already sworn that the letter just read was meant for Miss Clifford?”

“It was.”

“Have you ever on any occasion, when addressing Lady Hovingham, signed yourself affectionately?”

“Never.”

“Look at this envelope. Is the address on it written by you?”

“It is not.”

“Is this the envelope in which the letter you swore you addressed to Miss Clifford was enclosed?”

“It is not. The envelope I sent had my crest and monogram upon it.”

“Where was your letter to Miss Clifford posted?”

“At Croydon.”

“I see this envelope has the London mark. Do you swear that the letter addressed to Miss Clifford was posted at Croydon and not in London?”

“I do.”

Lord Hovingham underwent a most severe cross-examination, in which he admitted that he had turned his wife out of doors on account of her jealousy of his cousin. He, also, when under pressure, admitted that he never himself had seen any levity on the part of his wife; that his attention was first called to the subject by anonymous letters, and further that his confidence in Captain Northam was such that he had requested him to take

charge of his wife on her journey to Scotland to visit a relation.

Sir Frederick then rose for the defence, and in one of the most brilliant and touching speeches ever delivered (Sheridan's celebrated one on the Begum trial not excepted), denounced the whole as a plot got up by a designing woman, who worked upon the feelings of a weak imbecile to possess herself of his fortune.

The allusions to the neglected and deserted wife, to her affectionate and simple appeal for justice, brought tears into the eyes of many, and a buzz of admiration was heard as in a splendid peroration he pronounced Lady Hovingham to be as pure as an angel in heaven.

In Sir Frederick's arguments his language was easy and dignified. He displayed a profusion of legal learning; his mode of applying it was luminous, and his conclusions carried conviction. His motto was that of Sir Edward Coke, "Matter lies in a little room," an aphorism not often practised by

many advocates who seem to wish to make an impression upon their hearers.

Non vi, sed sæpe cadendo.

And here I must digress to lay before my readers some most excellent advice to members of the Bar, which I gleaned from a work published during the last century, but, I believe, little known to the present generation.

“In conducting an original examination for the purpose of establishing the facts of a case out of which the right to be insisted upon in behalf of the client, the first step is to lead the witness to the point from whence he is to set out, and care must be taken to keep him in the right road. He must drop nothing by the way ; if it is found that he leaves a chasm in his evidence, proper questions must be put to him to fill it up. If parts of his evidence should require explanation, he must be called upon to give the proper explanation, so that his evidence may be clear and connected. Above all that the

thread of his narration be not broken, for then confusion and thick darkness will follow.

“As these rules are observed or neglected, you will see one advocate dexterously leading an ignorant witness into his subject, and carrying him through a long examination in a clear and luminous order, without difficulty, or even hesitation on the part of the witness; while another, after labouring for an hour to get him from the alehouse, the *terminus a quo* of every low narrator, finding himself entangled, the cart before the horse, unable to proceed, with all that has been perfectly unintelligible.

“A story is told of a barrister, who, after trying in vain to disentangle the confused skein, broke out into the following exclamation—

“‘Either I am the dullest fellow that ever lived, or you are the most incomprehensible fellow I ever met with!’

“‘I don’t know how that may be,’ replied the witness, with the most provoking *sang*

froid, 'but I was behind the tub, as I told you before.'

"After this explanation the thing remained as inexplicable as before.

"Cross-examination, in its proper sense, means sifting and trying testimony given on the adverse side. This is a very delicate operation; it requires a piercing eye, quick apprehension, great sagacity, and infinite address. The advocate must see in an instant the whole effect of the testimony which he is about to sift; its bearings upon every part of the case—his own case as well as that of his adversary; its strong and its weak places. He should moreover know the mechanism of the human mind; be able to trace the passions through all their workings. He must be able to discern the character of the witness, read his thoughts in his countenance, and anticipate them.

"An able and judicious advocate, who has laid his foundation well and is practised in his business, and sufficiently instructed by his brief, will generally catch all this, as it were,

instinctively ; but if he happens not to have so clear and comprehensive a view of everything as he could wish, he will, like a skilful general, reconnoitre the ground before he attempts any attack. He will observe two golden rules—never to ask a question without having a good reason to assign for asking it, and never to hazard a critical question, without having good ground to believe that the answer will be in his favour.

“A judicious advocate, when he has discovered in what part the witness is most vulnerable, will not be too eager to make his thrust in cross-examination ; he will first consider whether the blot in the testimony be a proper subject for cross-examination, or for observation on the evidence ; using it in the latter way, he has the advantage of taking it with all its imperfections ; whereas the proposing a question upon it puts the witness upon his guard and enables him to introduce qualifications and explanations, and thereby to set himself right ; and to avoid the whole force of the observation,

which, in its original state, it was exposed to. There is another golden rule : never attempt to prove by your adversary's witness what you are prepared to prove by your own. There is a sort of triumph in forcing your adversary to prove your case, and so destroying him by his own evidence ; but it very rarely happens that the attempt succeeds, and the failure, which will happen nine times in ten, is by no means a matter of indifference to your cause. If the witness denies the fact you wish him to prove, you are then to set out with having your case denied upon oath, which you might have avoided, and if you happen to have but one witness on your part, you bring upon yourself the puzzle which one witness against one necessarily introduces ; but your adversary's witness may do more ; he may admit your case, and clog it with such circumstances as shall render it of no use to you. Once in a thousand times good use may be made of an examination of this kind. The fact may be so notorious, and so capable of proof, and so in-

capable of explanation, that to deny it, or to attempt to explain it, would blast the witness's credit entirely; but this so rarely happens, and the hazard of disclosing your case too soon, and putting it in your adversary's power to anticipate it is so great, that a clever advocate will not adopt it."

Who the author of the above remarks is I know not; they appeared more than a century ago; but they are as applicable to barristers of the present day, enlightened as they are, as they were to those when George the Third was king.

It is rather a dangerous experiment to introduce witticisms into a case, for if they hang fire they damage the cause; moreover, what appears as fun to them, may appear to the well-regulated mind of a jurymen, death to the client. It is all very well if the advocate can get the laugh with instead of against him.

Many instances of Bar merriment have occurred; few gave greater cause for laughter than the following:—

In the course of a trial in the Court of Common Pleas, February, 1826, one of the witnesses stated to Mr. Serjeant Vaughan, who was cross-examining him, that he (the witness) was a twine spinner and mat manufacturer, and dealt in flax and hemp.

Mr. Serjeant Vaughan, with all the air and manner of Dickens' "Buzfuz," said—

"I hope, sir, you will keep a little for your own use, for you are very likely to want it."

When the witness replied—

"I shall save enough for you at all events."

The merriment excited by this little dialogue had not long subsided when it was renewed by the following circumstance:—

The same witness was recalled by Chief Justice Best (who, be it recollected, had tried the action for false arrest) and, asked by his lordship what had taken place at an interview after the trial, between a certain Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Williams, the barrister—

"Why," replied the witness, "Goodwin

asked Mr. Williams if he ought not to move to set aside the nonsuit. Mr. Williams said certainly he ought, as he had good grounds for so doing, adding that the judge was a d——d old fool, or he would have let the case go to the jury.”

Lord Chief Justice Best joined most heartily in the roar of laughter which the reply drew from the whole auditory, with the exception of Mr. Williams, who, being seated immediately facing the learned judge, seemed quite overwhelmed with consternation at being thus suddenly brought, as it were, to pay his compliment to his lordship; fearing he should be considered less courteous than candid in the expression of his opinion, he most energetically disclaimed the language imputed to him.

The Lord Chief Justice then remarked—

“ These things will happen, Mr. Williams.”

Upon which Mr. Williams, with increased vehemence denied having used any such expressions, and got very warm on the occasion, on which his lordship said—

“Mr. Williams, for once learn temper of me.”

He then related an anecdote of Lord Kenyon, to whom, after trying an action one day, one of the parties came to make a complaint of the other, who had been defeated—

“‘What is it?’ asked his lordship.

“‘Why,’ replied the party, ‘he said your lordship was a rogue and the jury were fools.’

“‘Well,’ said Lord Kenyon, ‘I forgive him, and I hope so do the jury.’”

To return to the Hovingham trial:—

The only witnesses called for the defence were Lady Clara Lorimer, who swore that on the day the flyman had stated he had driven Captain Northam to Riversdale, Lady Hovingham was with her in Essex. Lady Clara underwent a severe cross-examination, but nothing could shake her testimony.

Mary Green was then put in the witness box.

“You were six years and a half housemaid at Riversdale?”

"I was."

"Did you ever see Miss Melvill in the act of opening an envelope?"

"I did."

"How did she go to work?"

"She held the letter over a jug of hot water, and when the gum was melted took out the enclosure."

"Did you ever see her take out of one envelope an enclosure and put it in another envelope?"

"Only once."

"Did you on that occasion notice what she did with the original envelope?"

"She opened a letter with a printed paper in it, took it out, threw it under the grate, and enclosed another letter, the envelope of which she also threw under the grate."

"Where were you during this time?"

"Dusting in the bedroom, which is next to Miss Melvill's dressing-room."

"Was the door open?"

"Partly so."

"And I suppose you peeped in?"

“I did, sir.”

Laughter in the Court, which was suppressed.

“Did Miss Melvill leave the room suddenly?”

“Yes, sir; the breakfast bell rang, and she hurried down stairs.”

“And what did you do?”

“I continued dusting, sir.”

“Nothing else? Remember, you are on your oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

“Well, sir, when Miss Melvill left her room I went in and tidied the grate.”

“Did you find anything in it?”

“Yes, sir; a printed paper and an envelope, both torn in half.”

“And what did you do with the printed paper and envelope?”

“I showed it to John Springfield, who lives in the village, and he made out—for he is more of a scholar than I am—that it was directed to Miss Clifford.”

“Now, look at the printed paper and

envelope, and say whether they are the same you found in the grate."

"They are, for John Springfield marked them both at the time."

"I have no question to ask this witness," said Mr. Serjeant Scruton.

Witnesses were then about to be called, including every lady that was in the habit of visiting Riversdale, when the foreman of the Jury intimated to the President that they required no more witnesses, as they had made up their minds upon the subject.

In summing up, the President, in a most elaborate speech, went through the whole of the evidence that had been brought forward on the part of the petitioner, the contradiction it had met with, winding up by declaring the evidence was in most instances unfounded in fact, and in a few grossly exaggerated.

"Gentlemen, be kind enough to record your verdict."

"We find Lady Hovingham was not guilty of adultery with Captain Northam: we find

Captain Northam was not guilty of adultery with Lady Hovingham."

A burst of applause from the assembled crowd followed this announcement; the ill-treated wife was surrounded by her friends, and as she left the Court, without a blemish on her fair fame, a shout from without showed the feeling of the assembled multitude.

Lord Hovingham looked the picture of despair, and his despair would have been increased had he heard the remark of his leader and second counsel, the former of whom said—

"Had I known the case I would have thrown up my brief," while the other declared that the case was so disgraceful that he felt it to be his duty not to say one word.

For the next few days letters of congratulation were brought to Lady Hovingham by every post, and those, who, misled by Lord Hovingham, came to scoff remained to praise.

How unequal and unfair are the laws re-

specting women ! With a verdict in her favour, all that was left the ill-used wife was either to sue for a restitution of conjugal rights, which, with the fiendish woman still in the house and in the ascendancy, was impossible, or to be content with a deed of separation, in which a certain comparatively small sum was to be doled out to her, the cause of all this misery and scandal revelling in every luxury that a fond dotard could bestow on her.

Great were the rejoicings at Riversdale and throughout the county when the verdict in favour of Lady Hovingham was known. The neighbouring village of Sedgeford was illuminated in rather a primitive manner, tallow candles taking the usual place of gas jets, a bonfire blazed on an elevated mound near the market place, and squibs and crackers furnished the pyrotechnic exhibition.

The unjust treatment Lady Hovingham had received through the infamous false charges brought against her had excited the indigna-

tion of all within the circle of her acquaintance, rich and poor, high and low, and curses loud and deep were hurled against her defamers. Lord Hovingham's sycophants denounced Mary Green as a false witness, proceedings were threatened against her on a charge of perjury. They, however, were never carried into execution, and so little was her character damaged by the evidence she had given, that she found no difficulty in getting a situation in a clergyman's family in the neighbourhood of Riversdale.

Time circled on—another year had passed away.

At Riversdale the roses were yet in bloom, and the clematis and honeysuckle twined between the latticed windows of the old hall. Every object around breathed the fragrance of flowers—the charms and sweets of Nature. The heat of summer had not parched the park or meadows, and autumn's yellow tints had just tinged the shadowy lea.

Wearied with London life, where he had

hoped to distract his mind by dissipation, Hovingham retired to this retreat—a prey to the fever of disappointment and regret, baffled in his attempt to rid himself of his wife, but still more effectually made wretched by the desertion of all his relations and friends.

Joanna Melvill endeavoured in vain to attract to Riversdale the families which resided in her neighbourhood, though she herself saw the obstacles and dangers of her attempt. The relations and friends of Lady Hovingham had revealed many of her past errors, and a thousand calumnious reports were propagated against her by those who warmly espoused the cause of the deserted wife.

Hovingham shuddered at the humiliation she was about to brave, and endeavoured to dissuade her from her project. His representations were useless. He wounded her pride by his fears, even though he was cautious in expressing them; still she became

more eager to regain her position in the world.

She, however, failed to obtain any success, and bitterness mingled with rage was the result.





CHAPTER XII.

Be brave, for your leader is brave, and vows reformation ;
there shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a
penny ; and the three-hooped pots shall have ten hoops. I will
make it felony to drink small beer ; all shall eat and drink on
my score, and I will apparel them all in one livery, that they
may agree like brothers, and all shall worship me as their lord.

SHAKESPEARE *Henry VI.*

Alas ! but here the vilest passions rule ;
It is Seduction's, is Temptation's school ;
Where vices mingle in the oddest ways
The grossest slander and the dirtiest praise ;
Flattery enough to make the vainest sick,
And clumsy stratagem, and scoundrel trick ;
Nay more, your anger and contempt to cause,
These, while they fish for profit, claim applause ;
Bribed, bought and bound, they banish shame and fear,
Tell you they're staunch, and have a soul sincere ;
Then talk of honour, and if doubt's express'd,
Show where it lies, and smite upon the breast.

" The Election," CRABBE.

AMBITION, while confined within proper
bounds, is of the greatest utility to man-
kind, but when either hurried along with too

much precipitancy, or permitted to aspire to an object far above the capacity of the seeker, it becomes dangerous and contemptible; and many a man is inflamed by this empty ambition to gain a seat in the Legislative Assembly, for which neither nature nor education has fitted him.

Among the above number may be mentioned Lord Hovingham, who was fully prepared to stand forth with patriotic ardour as the champion of liberty, and a sworn foe to the "bloated oligarchy." These sentiments he believed to be popular at Rankston, a borough which he was ambitious enough to represent—or mis-represent as the case might be—in Parliament. His Lordship was fully aware that a bribe judiciously administered would effect wonders, and he was fully prepared not alone to distribute largesse among the enlightened and pure constituency of Rankston, but to shake hands with every butcher, shoemaker, baker, chimney sweeper, innkeeper, grocer and saddler of that immaculate borough, at the same time to

contribute to the wants of their better halves, their sisters and daughters, by giving tea parties to the grown up and buns and cakes to the juveniles. He was also ready to attend all public meetings, and daily to bellow out patriotic speeches, teeming with "Civil and Religious Liberty," "Purity of Election," "Reduction of Taxes," "Abolition of Sinecures."

For a length of time his Lordship had sighed to have "M.P." tacked to his name, and he was doubly anxious for that honour when he found himself cut by all his county neighbours. In the hunting field, where he trusted his liberal subscription would command a certain amount of respect, he was doomed to disappointment, for upon offering his hand to the master of the hounds he abruptly turned away. His reception by the cover's side was certainly the north of friendliness, for one and all gave him the cold shoulder. A hint, too, was conveyed to him that if the lady made her appearance she would probably meet with a far different

welcome than that usually extended to ladies in the hunting field.

Hearing that there was likely to be a dissolution, Lord Hovingham employed his friend Sharpness to proceed to Rankston, in which he possessed some property, so as to sound the electors. As a matter of course, the wily lawyer informed his client that there was every chance of success, the reverse being notoriously the case. A week before the election was to take place, Lord Hovingham and his cousin arrived in his chariot and four at the Crown Hotel, Rankston, having previously sent his carriages and horses to that borough, so that Mr. Sharpness might go about in great state canvassing the voters. There was no want of mural notices ; every dead wall, every scaffolding, every lamp-post was covered with posters describing Lord Hovingham as the true friend of liberty, the unflinching opponent of Conservative misrule, the honest advocate of retrenchment in every department of the State, the uncompromising enemy of sinecure offices, and a

strenuous supporter of those who voted for the disestablishment of the Church, the reduction of the army and naval forces. There were other notices referring to his lordship as the champion of the working classes, the philanthropic supporter of all charitable institutions, and possessing every quality which endears a nobleman to all classes of society. As a set-off to the above, there were some very pointed allusions to the late trial, some not very flattering remarks to the baron or the lady who had been so prominently brought before the public in a not over amiable light. Some ribald ballads of the Catnach school were sung about the town, in which "Go, Joanna," to the air of "Susanna," was the burthen. There were also some doggerel lines, introducing the principal points of the recent trial, in which the plaintiff was most severely handled, and the innocent wife warmly extolled. In vain did Mr. Sharpness threaten actions at law against the libellers who had thus dared to attack the nobleman he served; the result of such threats only

stimulated the authors to further exertions, and shortly an addition was made to the above lines in no very eulogistic terms, entitled, "The Pettifogging Lawyer."

In the days of rotten boroughs, Rankston had returned two members to Parliament, but the changes effected in our legislative institutions by the passing of the Reform Bill had long since come into operation. The glories of Bletchingly and Milborne Port had faded from our view; the sun of Old Sarum and Gatton had set for ever; and among the less harshly used victims which ministerial justice, tempered with mercy, had consigned to Schedule B, was the ancient borough of Rankston, the patronage of which had been, for the space of half a century, most impartially divided between the distinguished families of Hazlewood Court and Hovingham Manor. Accordingly, during the whole of that period, every succeeding election had witnessed the peaceful and uncontested return of two senators for that borough, judiciously selected from among the

members of those allied houses. Thus, during a long succession of Parliaments, the politics of Rankston were undisturbed by faction; and there is no saying how long this blissful state of things might have continued, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, had not the much-dreaded Bill announced to the trembling electors of Rankston the partial extinction of that ancient and loyal borough, by the reducing of its members.

Squire Hazledean, of Hazledean Manor, was the candidate on the present occasion on the Conservative or Orange side, and, as a liberal landlord, a kind friend, and thorough English sportsman, had endeared himself to all classes, high and low, rich and poor. After delivering his sentiments upon all the leading topics of the day, and declaring himself to be a staunch supporter of Church and State, concluded his remarks by referring to the address his opponent had issued, in which he had pointed out the duties of a legislator:—

“ Who, then, is the wise legislator, but he

who, rising far above the low and unworthy motives which too often actuate those who look no further than their own interests legislate for the public welfare? Suppose, then, a man should claim your suffrages—a man of high station tempted to win popularity by pandering to the evil passions of mankind, rather than secure fame by controlling them; sacrificing the good of his country by the dazzling prospect of reaching for himself some higher eminence to which ambition points, what would be your answer?"

"Hovingham's that man," shouted a man in the crowd.

"Again, I ask," proceeded Hazledean, "would you disgrace yourselves by returning such a man to represent you in Parliament?"

"Never! Never!" exclaimed the Orange party. "Three cheers for the Squire, and a groan for his Lordship."

"Do you apply your remarks to Lord Hovingham," asked Mr. Sharpness, wound up to a pitch of fury. "It's actionable if you did."

“ *Qui capet ille facit,*” coolly replied the Squire. “ If the cap fits, let him wear it.”

“ Brayvo, brayvo ; Hazledean for ever ! ”

Lord Hovingham, decorated with pink ribbons, then came forward on the hustings, and was received with the most unequivocal marks of contempt and insult. After a time, silence was in some degree restored, and his Lordship, who had learnt by heart a speech of Burke’s, addressed to the electors of Bristol in 1794, thus spoke :—

“ Freemen of Rankston—

“ Off, off.” “ Silence.” “ Hear him.”

“ Freemen of Rankston. Anxious as I am to have the honour of representing you in Parliament—

“ You never will.”

“ I will not consent to be your delegate, but will enter the House free and unfettered.

“ Gammon—draw it mild.”

“ The opinion of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representa-

tive ought always to rejoice to hear, and which he ought most seriously to consider ; but authoritative instruction, mandates issued which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and his conscience—

Cheers and counter cheers, with cries of, “Where was your conscience when you turned your wife out of doors ?” This was followed by a shower of eggs, not of the new-laid order, which caused the candidate’s light merino coat to look like an unsavory omelette.

He proceeded—

“These are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our Constitution.”

More cheering and counter-cheering.

“Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests, but Parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole, where not local purposes, nor local prejudices

ought to guide, but the general good resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member, indeed—

“Not you.”

“But when you have chosen him, he is not a member for Rankston, but he is a member of Parliament.”

“That’s more than you’ll be, my Lord,” exclaimed a shrewd lawyer retained on the other side; “you’ve cribbed a speech of Burke’s to the Bristol electors. You’ve *Burked* us, and we will *Burke* you.”

Shouts of laughter from the Conservative side.

Lord Hovingham then proceeded—

“If the fundamental principles of the British Constitution be good, it has not withstood the depredations of time”—

“Time passes,” shouted one of the Orange party; “cut it short.”

“Numberless evils have crept in and deformed its beauty. Who is hardy enough to deny the vexatious delay of legal processes, and the unnecessary infamous extortion

attending them, whereby the lawyers amass fortunes, and their unhappy clients are often ruined ?"—

"There's a slap in the face for you, Mr. Sharpness," shouted another.

"Well, who will deny the existence of numberless useless expensive sinecures, whereby the field of corruption is enlarged, the burthens of the people increased, and vice and profligacy encouraged ?"—

"You're a nice fellow to talk of profligacy," shouted another.

"Who can attempt to justify the sums drained from the vitals of the nation to keep up the pension list ? The mockery of Parliamentary representation is too notorious to dwell on, notwithstanding the Jesuitical sophistry of those who are interested to keep up the juggle."

"Walk up, ladies and gentlemen," shouted a waggish attorney's clerk, "and you shall see what you shall see—the great Riversdale Juggler trying his tricks on in Rankston."

"Party attachments govern men, and the

loaves and fishes are the objects of contention."

"I suppose you would not mind your share of them, would you?"

"Our penal laws—"

"What a pity you don't speak personally on the subject," interrupted the same sharp attorney's clerk retained for the Conservative candidate.

"I say, again, our penal laws, as at present administered, are odious and tyrannical."

"Draw it mild," bellowed a clod.

"Then, again, our criminal laws are too indiscriminate and sanguinary. The murderer and housebreaker, who deliberately takes the life of some victim who he has robbed, and the man who in a fit of jealous frenzy stabs his rival to the heart, receives an equal punishment. All and more of these abuses are tolerated to the disgrace of a civilised country."

"You're a pretty fellow to talk of jealous frenzy—look at home."

“In conclusion, Freemen of Rankston, my future constituents—”

“Never, never,” shouted the mob ;
“Hazledean for ever—Hovingham in the river.”

• “True to my principles, I will never desert them—”

“Who deserted his wife, eh?” (Groans and hisses.)

“And at the close of the poll, I hope to find an overpowering majority in favour of—”

At this moment a scroll (similar to those formerly used at Astley’s Theatre, announcing “He dies at sunrise,” or some such notice) was let down from the back of the hustings, on which appeared in black letters on a pink ground, “My ill-treated, ill-used, innocent wife.”

This roused the fury of the populace, and caused his lordship to retire, amidst a shower of brickbats, rotten eggs, cabbages, and other missiles, looking a perfect picture of resignation. He then made the best of his way to the Crown Hotel, ordered his carriage

to be in readiness the moment the poll was declared ; then finding that his opponent had carried the day by a large majority, stealthily left the town.

In the meantime Squire Hazledean was carried in triumph through the town, headed by a band of music, to the Castle Hotel, where he addressed the populace from the balcony. He then presided at the dinner given to the free and independent electors, where the usual speeches were made, in which corruption was denounced, Conservatism extolled, the usual toasts drank with due honours, and songs, loyal and Bacchanalian, were sung with loud choruses. Bowls of punch concluded the orgies within doors. Out of doors drunkenness and disorder did hard duty ; not a few fights took place between the Orange and Pink parties, and morning dawned upon Rankston as a town sacred to headache and heartburn.



CHAPTER XIII.

See the ball I hold !
Let the chemists toil like asses,
Our fire their fire surpasses,
And turns all our lead to gold.

GAY's Beggar's Opera.

SATED with home, and anxious to distract his thoughts by change of scene, Hovingham proposed to Joanna a trip to Rome, Naples, and Florence.

“ If I recollect rightly, you described those three cities thus—

Roma la Santa,
Napoli la Gentile,
Fiorenza la Bella.”

“ Yes,” she replied, “ and you must add to the list

Genova la Superba,
Veneiza la Ricca,
Padova la Dotta,
Bologna la Grassa,
Milano la Grande,
Ravena l' L'Antica.”

"Delightful," answered the artful lady, though not at all delighted with the idea of a visit to a city in which her antecedents were so well known.

"I've no great fancy for ruins, and statues, churches, and that sort of thing," continued Frank, "still one ought to see the Eternal City."

"Yes," responded Joanna, "all I fear is, that at this time of year the heat will be intolerable; moreover, my guardian told me yesterday that there was a great deal of fever at present in Italy, especially at Rome."

"Then we must postpone our visit there until some future occasion."

"For my part," proceeded Miss Melvill, "I should like a trip to Brussels, Aix la Chapelle, and Cologne. We might go by land and return by water."

"I am told the passage by the Rhine is very tedious, and that the steamers are crowded with cockney excursionists, so I rather fancy the rail."

“So let it be, Frank. We shall enjoy a few days at Brussels; I am dying to go over the field of Waterloo, for my father used constantly to talk of the glories of that battle.”

“Then, suppose we start next Monday. I will write and engage our courier, Jacques Hartoz. By leaving Victoria at 7.40 A.M., bar accident, we shall arrive at the Belle Vue in time for an early dinner and the Opera House.”

The travellers started as arranged, devoted two or three days to visiting the lions at Brussels, saw the hideous lion that disfigures the field of Waterloo, and then proceeded on their journey.

They passed two days at Aix la Chapelle, leaving for Cologne by the night train. “Conscience makes cowards of us all,” and Hovingham was not exempt from that feeling; he fancied that in the steamer, between Dover and Calais, at Brussels, and at Aix la Chapelle, a foreigner was watching his movements, still there was no overt act that he

could take notice of, when the train stopped at the first *buffet*.

Frank told the trusty courier to conduct Miss Melvill to it, and order her some coffee.

"In your absence," said he, "I shall smoke a cigarette."

Left alone in the carriage, he was in the act of lighting his cigarette, when the man, who he had fancied was watching him, suddenly entered it, and, drawing forth a revolver, presented it at Hovingham's breast.

"One word," said the stranger, "and it will be your last. Money I want, and money I will have. There's no time to be lost—hand me the contents of your purse." Taken by surprise, and with six barrels within a few inches of his breast, a stouter-hearted man than Hovingham would have been staggered. "It's my turn now," continued the man; "hand me the money, or I'll seize the purse and that travelling bag of the lady's."

Hovingham was bewildered; at last he exclaimed—

“Surely you are not Louis—”

“I am Louis Cambesi, once the affianced lover of Joanna Melvill. You called me tramp. Now call me robber, for money I will have.” Hovingham opened the leather bag which contained his money, and offered his assailant a roll of bank notes. “Let’s see, a hundred francs—five hundred francs—add that gold to it and I’m content. One word more. If you breathe a syllable of what has occurred to a living soul, not only you, but my affianced wife”—this he said with a satirical grin—“will receive the contents of this revolver. I am not to be trifled with; desperation has driven me to this step. I should have accomplished it in England, but feared the police. I followed you to Calais, Brussels, and to this place. Here comes the lady. Remember, if you inform against me, and I am incarcerated, a friend will avenge my cause. Your life and Joanna’s will pay the forfeit.” With this he called to a porter to place his bag in the train, about to return to Brussels, and,

politely taking off his hat, wished his victim "*buona notte.*" As he passed Miss Melvill he, in an under tone, said—

Guai a te. Tu non mi scapperai.

Acqua lontana non spegne il fuoco vicino.

Bullies are, generally speaking, poltroons ; there are, however, exceptions to every rule, and with whatever else Hovingham may be charged, he was no coward. His determination, then, was at once to give information to the authorities that Louis Cambesi might be arrested, so he sent for the Chef de Police, and informed him of the whole transaction.

"I will send a telegram off forthwith to all the stations on the line to Brussels to arrest Cambesi, for I have a warrant out against him for forgery," said the functionary, "but, I fear, he will evade us. He has as many disguises as the celebrated Vidoque ; and, for all I know to the contrary, he may by this time have assumed the guise of a Roman Catholic priest or a dignitary of the Church of England. If, however, you

will leave your address with me, I will communicate with you further on the subject."

Joanna Melvill was highly gratified at the step Hovingham had taken, for she felt that so long as Louis Cambesi was at large, she would never know a moment's peace.

Every endeavour to arrest Cambesi failed; instead of getting into the carriage that was about to start for Brussels, he took possession of his bag, changed his frock-coat, trousers, and travelling cap for a peasant's blouse, trousers and glazed hat; got into a third-class carriage, and travelled in the same train which conveyed his two victims—Hovingham and Miss Melvill—to Cologne.





CHAPTER XIV.

Time shall unfold what plaited * "cunning hides."

SHAKESPEARE.

A FEW days after Lord Hovingham's return from his unsuccessful visit to Rankston, Harry Northam received a note from Chesterford asking him to appoint an early hour when he could have an interview with him on most important business. Nine o'clock was named, and, punctual to the moment, Charley was ushered into Captain Northam's lodgings in King Street, St. James's.

"I was present," said Chesterford, "at the trial, and dined afterwards with a friend of Lord Hovingham's junior counsel. In the course of conversation, something oozed out that confirmed my suspicion that Miss Melvill was at the bottom of the whole affair."

"Too late, I fear, now," responded Nor-

* Plaited—doubled.

tham, "to take any further steps. I have been nearly ruined by the proceeding. What is worse, my prospects are in a sad state. If I don't get the appointment, my marriage must, I fear, be broken off."

"Wait a minute, my fine fellow, until I've spun my yarn. You recollect the Astrologer at Mrs. Clarendon's masquerade?"

"Perfectly well, and, if I remember right, I carried off a remnant of his dress, which I have kept for good luck?"

"Yes, such is the case. Have you still got it?"

"I fancy I have put it away in my writing-case, and there it probably is; but what has that to do with the case?"

"Listen; you recollect Miss Melvill leaving me at the door of the ladies' cloak room, and that I did not meet her again until just before supper?"

"Yes, I heard her tax you with not waiting for her."

"Was she not rather anxious to get the remnant of the dress?"

“She certainly asked me for it.”

“And after a time no Astrologer was to be seen?”

“Not that I am aware of.”

“Well, then, putting two and two together, I have come to the conclusion that Miss Melvill was the Astrologer.”

“But could she have changed her dress so expeditiously, for I certainly saw her a few minutes after she had spoken to me in her dress as the Priestess?”

“Nothing so easy; she might have had the Astrologer’s dress over the other, and could easily have doffed one and donned the other; it is constantly done at masquerades.”

“Now we must lose no time; I fancy I’m on the right scent, and will run our quarry down. Will you accompany me to Jacob’s the costumier?”

“Willingly.”

“Then order a hansom; and, of course, you’ll come back and breakfast with me?”

“ All right.”

Before reaching the costumiers, Charley said—

“ You must not utter a word ; all you have got to do is to keep your ears and your eyes open.”

“ Agreed.”

“ Is Mr. David Jacobs at home ? ” enquired Charley, as he entered the shop.

“ You will find him in the inner room,” responded a youth of very Israelitish appearance.

The two entered, and found the object of their search busily employed in arranging some sham jewels for a regal coronet.

“ Good morning, Mr. Chesterford ; can I show you anything ? ” asked Mr. Jacobs.

“ I am going to give you a very small order,” responded Chesterford.

“ Any order of yours will be duly attended to. I look upon you, Mr. Chesterford, as one of my best customers. Perhaps that gentleman requires a dress—I beg your pardon, Captain Northam, I believe. Ah, that was a splendid

Hungarian uniform you had for Mrs. Clarendon's masquerade."

"No, Jacobs, my friend requires nothing, and what I want I fear I shall not find."

"What is it, sir?"

"I am going, Jacobs, to do a little bit of the conjuring hanky-panky work to amuse some young people, and I wish to appear as the Wizard of the West of London."

"Samuel, just step upstairs and bring me down the costume we made for Isaac of York in 'Ivanhoe.' With a trifling alteration, and some mystical figures added, it would be just the thing."

"Why, Jacobs, you remind me of the clever Hebrew at Chatham."

"Who is that, sir, any one in my line?"

"No, he was in the general line. A young officer offered to bet that there was not a single article he could ask for that was not in his 'store.' The wager was taken up for a dozen of champagne, and the article named was a second-hand coffin. Off they started, and found Mr. Isaac Mendoza in his shop."

“ ‘What can I do for you gentlemen?’

“ ‘We require a second-hand coffin.’

“The Israelite was quite equal to the occasion.

“ ‘Jabez,’ said he, ‘just look in the back shop and bring the best second-hand coffin we have on hand. Pray sit down, gentlemen; it will take some little time, as the shop is very full of other furniture.’

“As a matter of course, like master like man, Jabez had a true eye for business. He ran off to the undertaker’s, struck a hard bargain with the man, and in less than ten minutes returned with a coffin almost as good as new. After a little bartering, the coffin was re-purchased by Mr. Mendoza, whose health was drank in a bumper of champagne.”

“Clever, very clever,” said Mr. Jacobs, not over pleased at this skit against one of his own persuasion; “but here’s the dress I spoke of.”

“Oh, that won’t do,” said Charley, “I require it for this evening, and no alteration

will give it the real wizard look. I'm sorry to have troubled you, we must go and see whether Maurice Levi has one that will suit."

"Stay, Mr. Chesterford, it has just occurred to me that we may have exactly what you require."

"What, you are coming Isaac Mendoza over me?"

"No, Mr. Chesterford, I'd scorn to be guilty of such an action; but I remember that we made up an Astrologer's dress for one of your party at Mrs. Clarendon's masquerade; it was a reversible dress—upon one side that of an Astrologer, on the other that of Norma. I fear, however, it has been taken to pieces and the materials used for separate dresses, but I'll enquire. Samuel, just step upstairs and ask Judith whether by any chance she has the dress or any part of it that she made up for a lady for Mrs. Clarendon's masquerade—it was that of an Astrologer and Priestess."

Charley gave a knowing nod to his friend Harry Northam.

After a time, Judith, a handsome dark eyed maid of Judah, made her appearance with the skirt of the costume in question.

Mr. Charley gave another and more significant nod to Northam.

"That might do," said he, "but it isn't quite what I require."

"In less than three hours I will make the dress complete; all you will require is a sugar-loaf shaped cap and a wand, and that I can furnish."

"But, Jacobs, what will you charge for the evening?"

"As you are so good a customer, I will say four guineas; to any one else I should say five."

"Four guineas, nonsense; why the whole affair is not worth that, if I were to buy it outright. I fear I must go to Maurice Levi's."

"You are very hard upon me, Mr. Chesterford; sooner than lose your custom, I will say three guineas."

In the meantime Chesterford had care-

fully looked over the skirt and saw that a piece had been torn off. He continued—

“I’ll tell you what I will do, Mr. Jacobs, I’ll give you three guineas for the skirt as it is, and will pay you half a guinea for the use of a cap and wand for one evening.”

This was said to blind the Hebrew, who he knew would raise the price if he once suspected that his customer had some strong motive for purchasing the dress.

“But,” responded Mr. Jacobs, “you will allow me something for making up the dress?”

“No, I shan’t require that; I have a splendid silk smoking jacket which will do admirably well with this skirt; but I see a piece of the border has been torn—was that done here or before the dress was returned?”

“Certainly not here—was it Judith?”

Like Moses in the *School for Scandal*, Judith was ready to “take her oath of that.”

“Well, here’s the money; I’ll take the

skirt with me, and send the cap and wand to my lodgings, No. 40, William Street, Lowndes Square, before four o'clock."

"Let Judith just mend the tear," said Mr. Jacobs, highly pleased with his morning's work; "and at any time I shall be most happy to attend to your order or that of any of your friends."

"Thank you, Jacobs; I won't trouble you further. Tell Samuel to run for a hansom—oh, there's one passing the door; hail it."

The cab was hailed, and the two friends, delighted with their morning's walk, were driven off to King Street.

"While breakfast is preparing," said Northam, "I will go upstairs and get my writing case."

"Stay," said Charley. "We must not throw away a chance; some disinterested witness ought to be present at the *dénouement*, or that arch fiend of a Priestess will declare that we have got up a conspiracy against her. Couldn't you send to the 'Rag' for O'Hara; he is generally there about this hour."

“I will, if you like, write to him a few lines at once, but he would be looked upon as an interested witness. My proctor, Tinsley, is to be here at half-past eleven, and would, I am sure, be delighted to help us, free from charge, for he is a most liberal fellow. By the way, will you meet him at dinner to-day at the Army and Navy; seven sharp, as he has work to do at night?”

“I shall be very happy to meet him,” responded Chesterford, who certainly on that occasion had well earned his breakfast and dinner.

Shortly after breakfast, while the two were enjoying their cigarettes, Mr. Tinsley was announced, and the case laid before him. Calling for pen, paper, and sealing wax, the whole affair was conducted in the most businesslike manner; the writing-case was opened, the piece of the dress taken out which infolded an artificial rose Sophia Clifford had worn the evening of the masquerade; the piece was found to match the skirt, and the whole was packed up and

sealed in the presence of the three witnesses, who also signed a document detailing all particulars of the transaction. Mr. Tinsley, who to his great legal abilities added caution, requested time to consider what steps had better be taken to expose Miss Melvill.





CHAPTER XV.

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy ;
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
Is virtue's prize.


POPE.

How truly does Joseph Alexander Segur write on woman's love: "Let us examine love, its delirium, its wanderings, its excesses, its tenderness, its devotion, the contrariety of ideas which it inspires ; let us compare its effects with the heart of women, such as Nature has formed them, not such as the distractions of the world frequently present them to us ; and we shall inevitably conclude that love is made for them, and that they are made for love. Women are born to love us, to console us under hardships ; we to love them, and to protect them against every danger."

Now if ever there was a woman born to

love, to console a man under hardships, it was Margaret Hovingham; if ever there was a man less capable of protecting a woman against every danger it was Francis Hovingham.

Never was there so unselfish a being as Margaret; during her whole life every sacrifice she made was so accordant with her feelings that she laid aside all consideration of herself, and entirely devoted herself to promote the happiness of others. Occupied with the concerns of her house and loving the husband of her choice, she inspired the esteem of all who came within the circle of her acquaintance. Unhappily, as it has already been proved, she was united to a man whose early licentious habits had blunted his finer feelings, and made him callous to the charms of that sex which has created the felicity of all ages, a sex adored by youth, esteemed by mature age, respected and cherished by the old, who still cling to the hope that it will afford a charm, and consolation to their last moments.




For weeks and months after the trial, Lady Hovingham indulged in a grief so silent and profound as sometimes to alarm those who loved her, that her reason would desert her. In the society of her dear relatives and friends, she for the moment laid aside her sorrows and appeared cheerful; with ordinary acquaintances the abstraction and apathy of her manner proved that life was becoming a burden to her. Determined to make one struggle more to be restored to her home she addressed the following letter to her husband.

“MY DEAR HUSBAND,

“I write not to upbraid you, or to sharpen the remorse that you must feel when you remember your broken vows and violated promises. No, let your own conscience be your only accuser and punishment. I still entertain a sincere affection for you, and no unkind usage, no cruel wrong shall ever remove it. Rumour informs me with too much authenticity that I am no longer the object

of your love, that I shall see your face no more. I, who expected that you would have welcomed me home again, who had counted the slow hours which parted you from me, think how shocked I was at hearing you had gone to Scotland with Miss Melvill. Ten years have passed away since on your knees you swore an eternal love for me, and received the same vows and constancy from my lips ! Heaven can bear witness how faithfully I have honoured mine, and how dreadfully—but I wish not to reproach you, with the contrast. May your own heart, if it can, acquit you. I deplore the loss of your love, I deplore the frailty which has involved you in error, and which will, I am sure, terminate in misery. Break through the bondage that now enthrals you, if not for my sake, for that of your soul. Reflect what your feelings would be if stricken down with illness and lying on the bed from which you can rise no more. The reign of death is despotic, its force is undiminished, its terms unabated. The very thought of it chills the blood, sinks



the spirits, and draws a dark veil over the pleasures and glories of this life. Even amidst the brightest scenes of gaiety, it strikes a feeling mind with an inexpressible awe. It is the voice of nature, and that voice will be heard. What makes death terrible is sin. Would to God I could be with you in that awful hour to alleviate your agonies, to raise your sinking spirits, to offer up a prayer to a Merciful Father to pardon a repentant sinner, and thus to cheer your passage through the valley of the shadow of death. Though deeply injured by the fatal step you have taken, I forgive as I hope to be forgiven. If one spark of affection still lingers in your breast, return to your once loved and still loving affectionate wife,

“MARGARET.”

“P.S.—I ought not to repine. The misery I have experienced is the best preparative for another and a better world. The blow has nearly broken my heart. May I receive it with submission and resignation.”

At the very moment Lady Hovingham was writing the letter just referred to, her husband was seized with a severe illness, so alarming that the doctor who attended him told the butler that his lordship's relations ought to be apprised of his danger.

While Jennings was ruminating what was best to be done, Joanna Melvill, who had heard from a maid who had kept up her intercourse with Hovingham's servants, of his lordship's illness, lost no time in proceeding to Riversdale.

"The doctor has given strict orders that no one except the nurse, who he has sent from St. George's Hospital, should see his lordship."

"That order must be strictly obeyed," replied Miss Melvill, "there is no one here to attend to his wishes, I will remain here."

In crossing the hall Joanna's quick eyes had caught sight of two letters, one directed to Lord Hovingham the other to Lady Hovingham. Under the pretext of forwarding the one and delivering the other when the

patient should be sufficiently recovered to read it, Miss Melvill locked them safe up in her writing case.

The reader knows the contents of Margaret's letter. Her husband's, written after an event which we shall presently record, ran as follows—

“DEAREST MARGARET—

“By the time you receive this the hand which wrote it will be laid in the grave. I have ordered it not to be transmitted to you till I am departed, and I am now on my death-bed. I have been infatuated by one who loved me not, but loved my fortune, and left no effort untried to captivate my affection. But I must not carry malice with me to the grave. There is not, as I have already said, the least hope of recovery. I can scarcely wish it, unless it were to repent of my sins, the greatest of which was deserting you for a heartless woman. Forgive me, my dear wife, forgive me, and remember that the husband who cruelly closed his doors against

you, the best of wives, lived a wretch in consequence of his unkindness, and died prematurely. It was the last satisfaction he had that he lived to see his error, and to pray for pardon from above, and to ask forgiveness from his wife. Farewell.

“FRANCIS.”





CHAPTER XVI.

See that mansion tall,
That lofty door, the far resounding hall;
Well furnish'd rooms, plate shining on the board,
Gay liv'ried lads, and cellar proudly stored,
Then say how comes it that such fortunes crown
These sons of strife, these terrors of the town?
Lo! that small office! then th' incautious guest
Goes blindfold in, and that maintains the rest;
There in his web, th' observant spider lies,
And peers about for fat intruding flies;
Doubtful at first, he hears the distant hum,
And feels them flutt'ring as they nearer come;
They buzz and blink, and doubtfully they tread
On the strong birdlime of the utmost thread;
But when they're once entangled by the gin,
With what an eager clasp he draws them in;
Nor shall they 'scape till after long delay,
And all that sweetens life is drawn away.

CRABBE.

WE have been so much occupied with the principal personages of our drama, that we have had little time to pay attention to one

who figured in it in a subordinate and not over respectable character.

The best of every man's performance here
Is to discharge the duties of his sphere ;
A lawyer's dealings should be just and fair,
Honesty shines with great advantage there.

So writes Cowper, the poet. Whether the limb of the law with whom our readers are acquainted merits the above eulogium must be left to them to decide.

Mr. Sharpness had been brought up to the law, and commenced his career as clerk to a country attorney, Tredcroft by name, at Rankston. Being by nature very sharp, he soon ingratiated himself with his employer, who, after a time, took him into partnership. From that moment his good fortune set in, and his partner dying, Sharpness found himself the inheritor of the old lawyer's ill-gotten wealth, and the mansion he had built on the ruin of some of his clients. It was then Anthony Sharpness, Esq., fully realised the lines that head this chapter.

For some time he got on tolerably well

with the leading people of the borough, but an unfortunate bill transaction was brought to light, which implicated him so severely, that he sold his mansion and his country practice to a rival attorney, and established himself in London. Here he took for his partner his senior clerk, who had served him faithfully at Rankston, and who was tolerably well acquainted with many nefarious cases in which Mr. Sharpness had been engaged.

His acquaintance with Lord Hovingham commenced when, as a cornet, the latter wished to raise money to meet a pressing demand, and from that time he had been his lordship's legal adviser. The Italian proverb—

*Con arte, ed inganno, si vive mezzo l'anné,
Con inganno, e con arte, si vive l'altra parte,*

would not have been an inappropriate motto for Mr. Sharpness.

In course of time Mr. Sharpness had gained such an ascendancy over Lord Hovingham, that he appointed him auditor over all his accounts at a salary of three hundred a year,

and consulted him legally upon almost every subject.

One morning when the above were conning over a draft of a will, which the lawyer was preparing, Miss Melvill made her appearance to tell her cousin that the garden party at Marston had been postponed in consequence of the rain that was falling.

"You may sit down, my dear," said Frank. "We shall soon have finished our business, in which, by the way, you are interested."

"How can that be?" asked Joanna, with a look of feigned astonishment, for her quick eye had glanced over the paper, in which she read the words, 'Ten thousand pounds to Joanna, daughter of my deceased brother, Charles Hovingham, Colonel in the Army. Free of legacy duty.' "I won't interrupt you, Frank. I know Mr. Sharpness's time is valuable."

She was about to leave the room when the butler entered with a card, which he delivered to Lord Hovingham. "Mr. Fergus O'Lachlin, No. 31, Rue Royale, Boulogne-sur-Mer."

“O’Lachlin—O’Lachlin,” exclaimed his Lordship, “I’ve surely heard that name before.”

“Shall I see him, cousin,” said Joanna, trembling with emotion, which fortunately for her Frank did not see.

“Show him in, Jennings. You can take the draft, Mr. Sharpness. Leave everything as it now stands, but add Simpson’s name for a legacy of twenty pounds. I will sign it to-morrow.”

The lawyer bowed and retired, and shortly afterwards the visitor was ushered in. Mr. Fergus O’Lachlin was a short thick-set man, dressed more like a turfite than one of the legal profession, which may easily be accounted for. In consequence of some questionable affair of money, in which he applied to his own use funds belonging to a client, he found the county of Tipperary too hot to hold him, so he retired to Boulogne, where he established himself as a betting agent. There he made himself useful both as a lawyer and betting man, and

having realised a considerable sum, paid a flying visit to England in the hopes of purchasing a race-horse or two, with which he intended to victimise the unwary abroad. Low cunning was depicted in his countenance.

“May I ask, Mr. O’Lachlin,” said Lord Hovingham in the blandest tone, “what is the business that has prompted you to honour me with a visit?”

“Sure, my lord, I’ll tell you,” responded the lawyer, with the strongest Milesian brogue, “but I’ve a trifle of a reason of my own to wish to speak to your lordship in private.”

“This is my cousin; she is in my confidence; you may say what you have to say before her.”

“It is now some weeks ago that I got acquainted with a foreign nobleman, who claimed acquaintance with a member of your lordship’s family—Miss Melvill.”

“Surely,” interrupted Lord Hovingham,

“you are not the friend of that impostor, Louis—I forget the fellow’s name.”

“My lord, such expressions are actionable, but we’ll let that pass. My client, Louis Cambesi, got into a trifling difficulty, from which I was fortunate enough to extricate him. The money the young lady forwarded him was quite sufficient to pay witnesses and counsel’s fees”—here Joanna’s heart died within her—“but my costs, and a small advance I made to enable Cambesi to leave Boulogne, have remained unsettled. A few lines which he addressed Miss Melvill will explain all. Not knowing that lady’s address, I sought an interview with your lordship—for in her absence your lordship was authorised to open the letter.”

“A letter for Miss Melvill—give it to me.”

“No, no, cousin, let me have it; it is the effusion of a madman; let me destroy it unread; it will only upset me.”

“Miss Melvill,” said the obsequious

lawyer, "I was not aware that I stood in your presence. Here is the letter."

Hovingham extended his hand, seized the fatal document, which he held firmly, though Joanna tried to get possession of it.

"Cruel, cruel Francis; your unkindness and want of confidence will kill me."

With this she burst into tears and left the room.

"Although your client, Mr. O'Lachlin, has no claim whatever on any member of my family, as you seem to have acted fairly towards a misguided man, I will see that the money you claim shall be paid over to you. One word more, what has become of this Louis Cambesi?"

"He quitted Boulogne, my lord, for Bordeaux, where I believe he now is. I grieve to say there are other charges of forgery against him, though perhaps, like the last one, they are unfounded. Thank you, my lord—five and twenty pounds—exactly the sum. Fifteen pounds advanced to my client, paid witnesses five pounds, my costs five pounds;

let me give your lordship a stamped receipt in full of all demands."

Having acquitted himself as a lawyer, Mr. O'Lachlin, with an eye to business as a turfite, before leaving the room thus addressed Hovingham—

"If at any time your lordship feels disposed to invest any money on the Derby, Oaks, Ascot Cup, Goodwood Stakes or the St. Leger, I shall be happy to execute any commission. My prophecies, which appear under the name of 'Tip.'—named after the country that gave me birth—are often right, and the handsome manner—I may say the very handsome manner—in which your lordship has behaved lays me under an obligation which shall at all times be fully acknowledged. Our business is conducted with the greatest secrecy and attention towards our clients. Permit me to offer your lordship a card."

Mr. Fergus O'Lachlin then retired, and for a time Hovingham was left to indulge in most bitter thoughts. That Joanna had de-

ceived him there could be no doubt, still she might be guiltless of any serious crime.

"This letter," he said to himself, "would either clear or convict her. It is addressed to Miss Melvill or Lord Hovingham."

Irresolute as to what he should do, he for a few moments stood gazing at the direction. Then he broke the seal, took the letter from the envelope, again replacing it. At last suspense became so terrible that he tore open the cover and began to read it. His worst suspicions were confirmed. The scoundrel Louis, in asking for further supplies, referred to the dark deed he was guilty of at Albano, reminding her of the solemn pledges she had given him of becoming his wife. It concluded by his saying he returned her a portion of her letters, which would be duly handed to her by his trustworthy friend, Mr. Fergus O'Lachlin. "The whole may be false—no letters are enclosed. I may have done an injustice to my beloved cousin." These and other thoughts passed rapidly through Hovingham's mind, and he

was about to seek the presence of her he felt he might have wronged, when Jennings again appeared.

“Here’s a packet for Miss Melvill or your lordship which Mr. O’Lachlin forgot to deliver.”

“Jennings, tell Miss Melvill I wish to see her.”

Shortly afterwards Joanna—like Niobe, all tears—made her appearance.

“It is not my wish,” said Lord Hovingham, sternly, “to accuse you unjustly. The contents of this packet will prove your innocence or guilt. All I require to know is, whether the letters to which Louis Cambesi refers are genuine or not.” Here he opened the packet. “If they are forgeries I will again take you to my heart; if on the contrary, we part never to meet again.”

“Forgive, oh! forgive me, dearest Frank.”

“Say no more, my misery is complete. Return to your guardian to-day. His recent indisposition will account for your sudden

departure. I cannot trust myself to say more."

Hovingham then rushed out of the room, ordered the carriage to convey Miss Melvill home, and left the house, determined not to return to it until the cause of his agony had left it.

In less than an hour Mr. Tinsley arrived, and laid before Lord Hovingham an additional proof of his cousin's treachery.





CHAPTER XVII.

Oh! what was love made for, if 'tis not the same,
Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
I know not, I ask not, if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.

Thou hast call'd me thy Angel in moments of bliss,
And thy Angel I'll be, mid the horrors of this,
Thro' the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee, or perish there too.

T. MOORE.

But, oh! it sends a sweetness through my fate,
That I am thine again; and, without blame
May in my Tancred's arms, resign my soul.

THOMSON.

LADY HOVINGHAM had in early life basked too long in the smiles of unclouded prosperity not to shudder at the chilling prospects before her; no wonder, then, that a feeling of heart-withering melancholy had hovered around her like a thin mist over the mountains; it soon became a cloud, which

overshadowed her cheerfulness and crippled her activity.

For months she struggled against that misfortune which had blighted her life and made existence a burthen to her. Wounded pride, hatred of the vile woman whose machinations had deprived her of a once loving husband, produced a deep and hopeless melancholy, which desolated her soul.

Through the exertions of her friends to rouse her from the state of lethargy she had sunk into, Margaret occasionally mixed in society; but even then she felt the truth of the lines—

From sport to sport they hurry me,
To banish my regret,
And when they win a smile from me,
They think that I forget.

One evening, when dressing to accompany her sister to the Albert Hall, she accidentally took up the *Echo*, when her attention was attracted to the following paragraph :—

“ We regret to hear that Lord Hovingham has had a relapse, and great fears are enter-

tained that the typhoid fever, under which his lordship is suffering, will prove fatal."

Margaret dropped the paper from her trembling hand, rang the bell violently; her face was pale as death, and wore an expression of hopeless misery.

"Bring me the 'Bradshaw,'" said she, in a voice tremulous with emotion, addressing her maid, who entered the room. "Order the brougham to the door, and pack up my things for the night."

Sending a few hasty lines to her sister, who was to have called for her, she entered the carriage, and desired the coachman to drive with all haste to the Waterloo Station.

In a few hours she reached Bishopstoke, and as the church bell tolled midnight, drove up to Riversdale.

Alighting at the lodge gate, she ran up to the house, and, entering it at the back entrance, made her way to the pantry, where she met the old butler, Jennings.

"How is my lord?" she particularly asked.

“Alas ! I fear there is no hope,” responded the faithful servant.

“I must see him at once, ere it be too late.”

So, rushing up the stairs, she gently entered the room, where the only inmate was a nurse, who made a sign that the dying man was sleeping.

Gently approaching the bed, she pressed her burning lips on his pallid forehead. Suddenly awaking, he feebly exclaimed—

“Is it you, Joanna ?”

Those words drove daggers into her soul ; but by a strong mastery over herself she shook off the agitation.

“No, Francis, it is me ; your poor neglected Margy ; by the love you once bore me, turn not away.”

“Margy, my much beloved, canst thou forgive me ? Farewell ; my hour is approaching. All will be forgotten in the silence of the grave. Death—death ; eternal darkness.”

“Francis, life of my soul, I forgive thee ; I told thee so in my letter.”

"Letter! I never received it."

"Thy smile, like a ray from Heaven, has shone upon my hitherto dark and wretched existence."

Again she murmured, in a scarcely audible voice—

"Frank, my beloved."

And he who was insensible to everything else, smiled, tried to reach out his hand towards her, uttered "Mar—" and expired.

Then came a burst of prayer, followed by agonising tears. At that moment the door was abruptly opened, and Joanna Melvill stood before her. A flash of indignant light shot from Margaret's eyes.

"You were once kind to me, Margaret," said the fiend, assuming an air of humility. "You know not all."

"I know too much," responded the now widowed wife, accompanied with a glance of intense contempt. "Through your machinations I was driven from a happy, happy home; gloat upon your victim, now lying dead before you."

“Forgive me, and listen, I implore you.”

“Your last act, as I hear from Jennings, was to possess yourself of letters written by my husband and myself.”

“Have mercy upon me.”

“Can you ask me for mercy,” replied Margaret, with icy coldness.. “I can speak nothing but truth beside a death-bed. May God forgive you. Ask me no more.”

If a look could have killed, there would have been two corpses in that room. It is more easy to conceive than to express the various emotions and passions that displayed themselves in the mournful scene just recorded. In Margaret the struggle between hopeless misery and dire resentment was at its height.

The relief of mind which Hovingham felt at once more being restored to his wife's affection, brief as it was doomed to be, was seen in the faint smile that in vain attempted to lighten up his pallid cheek, and the conscious delight springing from the part he had acted, even at the eleventh hour, filled his breast, while

that of Joanna Melvill was thrown into a tempest by the sudden encounter of passions more furious than the warring elements that spread desolation in tropical climes—disappointment, dismay, rage, revenge, at once assailed it; the blood forsook her cheeks, her pale lips quivered, and she darted a ghastly look around the room. Finding herself completely defeated, and her detection so clear that not a shadow of doubt remained as to the heartless, cruel, sinful part she had played, Joanna, after pausing for a few minutes, with crocodile tears in her eyes, again appealed for forgiveness.

“One word, and only one word more,” exclaimed Lady Hovingham, “if you really repent, and wish, as far as lies in your power, to atone for your past heartless—I could use a harsher word—conduct, leave this house at once, and never again cross my path.”

Here she burst into a flood of tears.

Joanna, in an imploring tone, said—

“Give me your hand in token of forgiveness.”

Margaret drawing herself up, answered in a tone of dignity—

“Leave me.”

As Margaret pronounced these words, she arose. She no longer wept, but a deep melancholy was visible in her eyes, and her whole countenance was marked with intense grief.


Worn out in body, Lady Hovingham threw herself upon the sofa, and sought repose in rest; but all night long her sleep was broken with dreams—feverish, excited dreams—in which her past life flitted before her. Her pure and innocent life when as a child she wandered through the woods of Rylston, decking herself out with flowers like a young Flora; then the bells of the village church vibrated in her ears, as on the day the husband of her choice swore to love, to honour, and obey; then came the bitter pang of one “who doats yet doubts, suspects but strongly loves—” here she started from her sleep, and found ’twas but a dream. Again dozing she dreamt of that awful day when she was driven from her

home, of the trial where her innocence was proclaimed, of the heartless conduct of her who induced her husband to sign a deed of separation, and, last of all, his death. Nature claimed some relief, and for a few hours she slept calmly. On awakening, her eyes were hot, her mouth was parched, her limbs trembled, and she felt too prostrate to leave her couch. The careful nurse who had sat up through the night in the adjoining room now brought her a cordial which she persuaded her to swallow, and then left her to seek the doctor. Alone, she sank into heart-rending grief; at one time she would exclaim—

“Would that God had spared him. The fever which consumes me, nothing in this world can allay. Oh! that I could find repose with God. Repose in the grave!”

Doctor Yeldham now approached, and in tender accents urged her to retire into another room which had been prepared for her.

“You are now alone in the house,” said he. “Miss Melvill has left.”



“Then I breathe again,” exclaimed Margaret. “None but a lawful wife shall approach his honoured remains.”

Although Margaret was not of a vindictive or resentful nature, she felt the truth of the remark of Johnson, who thus writes—

“It is easier to forgive while there is yet little to be forgotten. A single injury may be soon dismissed from the memory; but a long succession of ill offices by degrees associates itself with every idea; a long conflict involves so many circumstances, that every place and action will recall it to the mind; and fresh remembrance of vexation must still enkindle rage, and irritate revenge.”





CHAPTER XVIII.

Non, je ne comprendz pas de plus charmant plaiser
Que de voir d'héritiers une troupe affligée,
Le maintien interdit, et la mine allongée,
Lire un long testament où pales, étonnés,
On leur laisse un bonsoir avec un pied de nez
Pour voir au naturel leur tristesse profonde,
Je reviendrais, je crois, exprés de l'autre monde.

REYNARD.

WILKIE immortalised himself by his graphic picture of reading the will, and the same features that characterised his masterly conception were recognisable in the features of those who were present at the reading of Lord Hovingham's last Will and Testament. The only difference was, that one depicted humble the other high life, but the passions and feelings of men are equally strong in both. At eleven o'clock on the day after the funeral had taken place, Mr. Sharpness summoned the

family, friends, and domestics of the late lord into the library, where he sat with the document before him. With the exception of Miss Melvill and Mrs. Clifton, the curate's wife, who had been requested by the widow to make notes of it, none of the ladies attended. The lawyer in rather a pompous tone, intermingled occasionally with a deep sigh, read the document. It was dated three years previous to the day on which his lordship departed this life; he bequeathed to his dear wife the house, farm, gardens, at Riversdale for her life, and the entire bulk of his fortune, with the exception of a legacy to Aunt Harriet, and to his old butler Jennings. In addition to the above, he bequeathed to his wife fifteen thousand pounds in foreign bonds, and five thousand pounds invested in consols. Lady Hovingham was appointed sole executrix and residuary legatee. In a codicil of a later date, Mr. Sharpness was appointed an executor with a legacy of five hundred pounds.

“If any one interested in the will,” said

the lawyer, "requires any explanation respecting it I shall be glad to furnish it."

At this suggestion a female figure in the deepest mourning, who had kept herself in the background, came forward and said—

"I thought, Mr. Sharpness, my dear, dear cousin had made a will of a more recent date. Not that I am personally interested in it."

"It is true, Miss Melvill," responded Mr. Sharpness, "that his lordship, a few weeks before his death instructed me to attend him with a view of his making some alteration in his former will, and a draft was submitted to his lordship in which you were personally interested ; but circumstances to which I need not revert occurred, and the draft by his lordship's strict injunctions was committed to the flames."

"But surely that draft showing his lordship's intentions ought to be valid."

"Not in law, Miss Melvill. Moreover, in the last interview I had with Lord Hovingham, in which I felt it my duty to make

certain revelations respecting a *bal masque*, his lordship, with his own hand, duly attested by two witnesses, wrote the following declaration :—

“The draft of a recent will was destroyed by my special orders to Mr. Sharpness, and the former document appointing Lady Hovingham executrix and residuary legatee, and the codicil appointing Mr. Sharpness executor with a legacy of five hundred pounds, must be received as my last will and testament.

“Signed

“LORD HOVINGHAM,

“In the presence of

“WILLIAM WATERTON, Footman, and
“JOHN NEWMAN, Coachman, } Witnesses.”

At this Miss Melvill muttered that her guardian would see justice done her.

Mortified pride, disappointed ambition, and conscious guilt struck at once their ice bolts to her soul, benumbed her faculties. Pale and trembling she sat with her eyes fixed, her tongue mute. She heard not the

voice of Mr. Sharpness as he quietly remarked that he should be happy to show the will and codicil to any that felt themselves aggrieved. Miss Melvill then retired, and shortly afterwards left the house. Even when alone her conscience was so seared that it did not smite her. There was no sign of repentance. There was a feeling of pain caused by detection rather than from guilt; there was more shame than sorrow, and more rage than shame.





CHAPTER XIX.

Done to death by slanderous tongues,
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies.

Back wounding calumny,
The whitest virtue strikes.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE next morning Margaret's looks showed how little she could bear a violent emotion. The death of her husband, the reading of the will; her reconciliation to him, her restoration to what she valued most, her own fair fame, all tended to increase the symptoms which had so much alarmed those dear to her. They fondly hoped that a favourable change would follow the comparative happiness she now enjoyed in being again in her own home, and if anything could have

cheered her drooping spirits, it was the affection and respect shown to her by the neighbouring gentry, the tenants on the estate, and the villagers, everyone of whom looked upon her as the Lady Bountiful of the parish.

Among those who most sympathised with her sorrows was an old woman in a cottage near the Lodge; there was an honest sincerity and true feeling in all she said, which, to adopt a somewhat hackneyed phrase, "did equal credit to her heart and head." "There was not in the whole county such a lady," said old Mrs. Shaw. "She scarcely ever misses a day without visiting the poor; often have I seen her trudging through the Lodge, the snow or rain beating down upon her, with soup and wine for the poor, and which her pampered footmen were too proud to carry."

Margaret's heart sunk as she found herself a widow in a mansion which once contained all that she held dear. In vain she tried to suppress the current of her thoughts, the

incidents of the past would force themselves back vividly to her memory. She remembered the time when she first entered the house as a happy bride, fondly hoping there to reside with the partner of her joys and sorrows till death did them part ; she remembered her rambles with Frank, her rides over the downs, her visits to the poor cottagers, her stroll to the village, her welcome at the Rectory, her delight at entering the picturesque old church, the gratification she received by the hearty welcome that greeted her everywhere ; these were visions of joy, and she would have dwelt upon them had not sadder scenes presented themselves to her disordered brain. With what agony did she recall the inflexibility of her husband, who rudely shut the door against her ; how mournful was the remembrance that another occupied the place she once held in her husband's affection. The thought was madness. One consolation alone remained—she had witnessed the hour when the obdurate, stony heart of her husband had been restored

to its former tender nature, when she might have exclaimed—

But, oh ! it sheds a sweetness through my fate,
That I am thine again, and, without blame,
May in my husband's arms resign my soul.

Fearing to distress those about her, she would at times affect all the gaiety of health, but her smiles were too frequently checked by a languor which no effort could resist. Her nights were feverish and disturbed by dreams which rendered her sleep unrefreshing.

In these wild visions of the brain Joanna Melvill would appear at the feet of her husband, beaming with unhallowed affection ; then, on a sudden, the whole scene would change to his death bed—there again would Joanna appear—still at length, struck with horror, she would start into wakefulness.

Margaret now day by day became gradually worse. A deep melancholy now reigned through the whole house ; her sister was nearly heart-broken, and could no longer disguise her despair. Albert Wittingham was

equally borne down by grief, and there was not a servant who was not depressed by the illness of one to whom they were deeply attached. The physician had told the sorrowing relations that all hopes of recovery were vain. Mary Wittingham remained day and night in the adjoining room. Early one morning she was summoned by the nurse to the bedside of the sufferer. Hope then vanished. Margaret fixed her eyes upon her sister as she drew near her. In vain did she attempt to speak, then stretching out her hand, which Mary pressed convulsively to her lips, she gave a gentle sigh and expired.

Well, with some trifling alteration, did Lady Hovingham merit the following eulogium by M. Douhaire in his clever translation of the Comtesse de Bouvenal of Lady Georgiana Fullarton :—

“Elle ne survécut pas longtemps à l'événement qui acheva de lui briser le cœur, comme un fleur qui e'close le matin, et bien-

tôt rejetée par la main qui, l'accueillie, exhale quelque temps un doux parfum, et meurt avant le soir, elle montra à un siècle pervers à une société corrompue l'exemple d'une pure et chaste vertu, d'un amour légitime et malheureux d'une constance qui ne se démentit jamais, à peine arrivée au milieu de la vie, la vie lui échappa, et dans la maison de son père ; cette maison son enfant elle avait joué, jeune fille aimée, et femme abandonnée pleurée, elle mourut à l'âge de quarante deux ans."

The hour now arrived which must consign to the dust all that remained of her whom Nature had formed to show how well perfect beauty became all moral excellence. During the service one stood beside the grave whose glazed and rayless eyes were fixed immovably upon the coffin, upon which she placed a wreath of white flowers. It was her devoted sister Mary. When all was over, and the crowd, which was very great, was beginning to separate, she, overcome with the

most poignant grief, was about to throw herself into the grave, when the strong hand of her husband seized her by the arm and kept her back.

“Let me join her in death,” she wildly exclaimed, then sunk upon the ground, and for a few minutes was deprived of sense. When she awoke, and her consciousness returned, she burst into a flood of tears, and was with difficulty torn from the spot.





CHAPTER XX.

Last scene of all,
That ends this strange, eventful history.

SHAKESPEARE.

My pen is at the bottom of a page,
Which being finished here my duty ends.

WALTER SCOTT.

Nothing so difficult as a beginning,
Unless, perhaps, the end.

BYRON.

WE must now bring our narrative to an end, but before we drop the curtain the *dramatis personæ* must appear to take a formal leave. Time, which does wonders, had in some degree alleviated the anguish of Lady Albert Wittingham at the death of her sister ; perfect confidence having taken the place of her former unfounded jealousy, she and her husband lived on the most affectionate terms.

Often did she quote the lines from the Romance Maure of "Ganzul et Zélinde"—

Dans un transport de jalousie,
Zélinde avoit banni l'amant
Qui la chérit plus que sa vie
Et fuit loin d'elle en gémissant.
Bientôt Zélinde, mieux instruite,
Se repoche sa cruauté ?
Comme un enfant, l'amour l'irrite,
Et pleure de l'être irrité.

At Lord Hovingham's desire the title became extinct. Harry Northam's marriage with Mary Clifford took place shortly after the death of Lady Hovingham to the joy of her and his family.

"L'iman invoque le prophète ; la peuple répondit par des vœux en faveur des nouveaux époux. Ils furent ensuite conduits, au son des cistres et des cymbales dans le palais l'Alhambra. Les parfums les plus exquis brûloient autour d'eux pendant la marche. Douze jeunes vierges vêtues de blanc précédoient la belle Moraime ; douze jeunes garçons couronnés de roses s'avançoient devant Almanzor. Ces deux troupes jetoient

des fleurs sur la chemin des époux, et chantoient alternativement ces paroles :

Présents du ciel, bénéfices charmants,
Tendre amour, aimable hyménée,
Vous seuls de nos plus beaux moments
Serrez la chaîne fortunée.

With a slight variation these lines descriptive of the marriage of the youthful Moraïme to the valiant Prince Almanzor in M. de Florian's romance, of "Gonzaloe de Cordave," would be applicable to that of Mary Clifford and Harry Northam. Instead of high bred Spanish damsels, and stalwart Spanish youths, the girls and lads of the village strewed the path to the church with roses. Though no prophet was invoked to bestow a benediction on this happy pair, many a prayer was offered up to the Almighty to shed a blessing on those who had been united in a marriage of the soul.

Their married life was one of unclouded bliss. Harry had been appointed to a secretaryship in the Custom House. In a villa at Richmond, surrounded by a bevy of children,

he and his wife were, to adopt a homely phrase, as happy as the day was long. Their only grief had been the untimely death of the friend of their youth, Lady Hovingham ; often did they visit the grave of her and her ill-fated husband in the rural churchyard of Riversdale. In this lonely spot, God's holy acre, all resentment was banished from their minds, yet they could not refrain from lamenting the sad career of one who had wasted the talents bestowed upon him by a life (to use no harsher term) of frivolity and dissipation. Still they remembered the Divine precept, "Cast first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is thy brother's eye."

We now turn to Charley Chesterford, who had, by dint of patience, gained the hand of Kitty Boken. It would be tedious to recount his courtship, proposal, and acceptance ; we will, therefore, give it in his own language in a letter addressed to his old friend Firebrace :—

“DEAR GENERAL,—

“You are the first to whom I am about to communicate a piece of intelligence that has made me the happiest fellow alive. I have proposed to and been accepted by Miss Boken. Ever since the day that my marriage with Miss Merrington was so suddenly broken off, I have never ceased to pay attention to one whose beauty and talent attracted me when first I met her at the Priory. I felt the case was hopeless, as so many aspirants were in the field. An impecunious guardsman, an extravagant Emeralder from the county of Sligo, a superannuated peer, and a Scotch nobleman, with an estate deeply mortgaged, were ever at her side, though I must do her the justice to say she gave none the slightest encouragement. Then, again, I gleaned from Mrs. Paisley that so long as her sister lived she would never leave her. A few months ago I heard not of Miss Emily's death, but, to my utter surprise, of her marriage. It seems that at Malta they fell in with a Lieutenant of the United States

Navy, who had in early life been devoted to his sister's playmate, Emily Boken. As boys and girls they had exchanged mutual promises of never changing love. The active career of Lieutenant Wickham had, in some degree, driven the remembrance of the object of his Love's young dream from his mind, but when he met her at Malta, greatly recovered from her illness, like a second Cæsar, he came, he saw, he conquered. It was then arranged that when the "Ohio" frigate was paid off, which was shortly to be the case, the happy pair, to adopt the nautical phraseology, were to be 'spliced.' This accordingly took place at Malta, when it was arranged that after a week of connubial bliss Mrs. Wickham was to accompany her sister back to England, where they were to be joined by the Lieutenant the moment his ship was paid off. I heard of their arrival at Brighton, where they were to remain until Wickham's arrival, ran down to that Queen of Watering Places, devoted myself to darling Kitty, who, amid the roar of the sea lions at the Aquarium,

kindly whispered 'yes,' when I proposed to take her for better or worse. The marriage is to take place next Monday week at St. George's; the breakfast will be given by Mrs. Wickham, at the Grosvenor Hotel, and if you are not there to act as my very best man, and propose the health of the happy pair, neither my wife (how nice that sounds) nor myself will ever speak to you again. What a punishment! Joking apart, you must come.

"Yours ever and truly,


"CHARLES CHESTERFORD."

His married life was unfortunately nipped in the bud, by the premature death of the fair Nova Scotian; Charley then returned to his former avocations. The only enemy which his flatterers said he possessed, the gout, had so completely prostrated him that he was unable to prowl about London seeking whose food he could devour. He therefore contented himself with taking up his station at the window of the Conservative Club in St. James's Street, from which he hailed every passer-by with whom he was acquainted.

Being near the mess-room of the officers on guard at the Palace, he occasionally sent a note to some "pal" suggesting how happy he should be if there was a vacant place for him at their dinner.

Unfortunately Charley had got into a terrible scrape with the officers of the Cavalry Household Brigade, so that his luncheons in their guard-room and dinners at the mess were cut off. Upon one occasion, when after dining with the officers of the Life Guards at Hyde Park Barracks, he dropped into the Regent Park Barracks, where the Blues were quartered, and began to expatiate upon the merits of their cook, declaring the dinner at the Life Guards was as bad as the company he met there.

With that *esprit de corps* which happily has always existed between the three regiments, one or two of the officers determined to resent the insult Chesterford had heaped upon their brethren in arms, and invited him to dinner. He came, extolled the *chef*, who he declared was equal to Francatelli.



“ This is something like soup,” he exclaimed ; “ quite as good as real turtle.”

No sooner had he uttered this, than he began to feel rather uncomfortable, and called for a glass of brandy.

“ Try that sauce, *à la Tartare*,” said one of the conspirators ; “ it will go well with the salmon.”

Charley tried it, and again experienced an inward sensation far from pleasant, and he was obliged to retire.

The hearty laugh that followed his hasty exit, and a remark which he overheard, convinced him that he had been a victim to a practical joke, and so it was, the plate of mock-turtle soup, and the sauce *à la Tartare* had been drugged with what is termed in scientific medical language, “ Jalapa,” jalap—the dried tubercles of *Exogonium Purga*—in Botanical order, “ *Convolvulacæ*—a drug imported from Mexico.”

General Firebrace continued to lament the degeneracy of the present race, until his latest

hour. Unfortunately he had placed a large amount in his banker's hands, with a view of purchasing a small house in London, being tired of living in lodgings, where he was fleeced by the landlady, "quite a different kind of person from landladys of my early days." The bank stopped payment, and then a real grievance presented itself. He denounced the extravagance of modern bankers, pointing out that, in his day, bankers were quiet, prudent, economical men, who attended so assiduously to their duties that they had not time to mix in the gay world. This heavy blow was followed by a heavier one; the old General, when crossing St. James's Street to his Club, was knocked over by a hansom cab, and received injuries from which he never recovered. During his illness he still continued to compare the medical men of the present day to those of bygone times, and almost his last words, as his doctor drove up in the hansom, were—

"These modern cabs go at an awful rate—give me the good old hackney coach."

Mr. Sharpness's career may be described in the words of the poet Guarina :—

L'ingannare, il mentir, la frode, il furto,
Et la rapina di pietà violata,
Crescer col' danno e precipizio altrui,
E far a se de l'atruì biàsimo onore
Son le virtù di quella gente infida.

After realising a large fortune, he retired from business, and still enjoys his *otium* (sine) *dignitate* in his suburban villa on the banks of the Thames.

Susan Dodson remained with Mrs. Fairholme until the death of the latter, when she found that her faithful services had been rewarded by a legacy of two hundred pounds. This legacy, added to her savings, amounted to upwards of four hundred and fifty pounds. With this treasure she was about to return to England, when one Jean Pierre Bruyset, who was anxious to have the female department looked after by an English woman, came forward and offered his hand to *la jeune et jolie fille*. After frankly avowing the fatal attachment she had in early life, she accepted Bruyset's offer. Whether the *dot* which Jean Pierre heard from his brother, Michel Etienne

Bruyset, an *avocat*, that Susan Dobson was entitled to have had anything to do with the proposal we know not; suffice it to say that shortly in the Rue Royale, Bordeaux, appeared the names of "Jean Pierre Bruyset, Chapellerie la mieux assortie de Bordeaux; Nouvelles Coiffeurs de Chasse. Applique aérogène frontale; assurant la ventilation de la coiffeur. Chapeau de soie adherents: à 16 fr. 18 fr. et 28 fr. English spoken."

No sooner had Messrs. Gibbs and Potter, of Australian renown, been compelled ignominiously to give up the turf, than they established a gaming house at Melbourne, and, for a considerable time, carried on a thriving trade. At last they were discovered using false dice, and playing on a *roulette* table with a mechanical spring that enabled them to let the ball roll into whichever hole they liked. A disturbance ensued; a regular fight took place; heads were broken; the lights were extinguished, and a rush was made at the bank, over which Mr. Potter presided. A cry from Mr. Gibbs to send for the police caused all the inmates to fly, and upon their

appearance a terrible sight presented itself. The body of Mr. Potter was lying on its face in a shocking state, his skull driven in and fractured in a most inhuman manner. The horrid act had been perpetrated by a blunt instrument, supposed to be a bludgeon. His pockets had been rifled, and the money of the bank had been swept away. No trace of the murderer was ever discovered.

Mr. Gibbs thought it prudent to retire from Melbourne before the coroner's inquest was held. Ruined in constitution, ruined in pocket, and ruined in reputation, this arch scoundrel proceeded to New York, where he was attacked with yellow fever, and fell a victim to its ravages.

Mr. Richard Jeafferson, who was left stunned by a blow from Oulaman's tomahawk, was shortly afterwards restored to consciousness, and made his way back to the public-house, where he had passed a few days in drunken revelry. Through the liberality of the owner of it, he was enabled to proceed back to Quebec, where he carried on his

nefarious business as a “crimp” for some time, enticing from their ships many British sailors, under a promise of getting them higher wages from the Americans. Drink, and a heavy fall he got in a broil with some Irish settlers, caused his death.

* * * * *

Of Serjeant M’Allister and his bonny wife,
we can only say that they realised the lines
of the Poet Burns—

John Anderson, my Jo, John,
We clime the hill thegither,
And mony a canty day, John,
We’ve had wi ane anither,
Now we maun totter down, John ;
But hand in hand we’ll go,
And sleep thegither at the foot,
John Anderson, my Jo.

It is sad to reflect on the lamentable career of two personages who figured most prominently in our history, Louis Cambesi and Joanna Melvill. Louis Cambesi, having squandered the money he had so unworthily obtained from Miss Melvill, retired to Calais, where he added forgery to his other

crimes; for this offence he was condemned to the galleys for five years. Here, in a fit of anger, he struck one of the warders a heavy blow, which terminated fatally; and, as he could bring forward no extenuating circumstances, he was sentenced to death; thus the guillotine terminated a career of reckless depravity.

Gifted with talents of no mean order, had this wretched man devoted those talents and energies to worthy purposes, he might have attained a high position in his own beautiful country, instead of reducing himself to the lowest state of degradation, ending his days as a murderer on the scaffold.

Joanna Melvill little dreamed of those scenes of horror and misery through which she has passed; she fondly imagined the world was her friend; nor was the veil of deception drawn aside till, alas! she had occasion for its friendship. Then the very persons who had been most anxious to court her smiles, who had beguiled her with their delusive flatteries, who had encouraged her

errors, were the first to keep aloof, and shun the wretchedness they had helped to accomplish.

In Miss Melvill's career we see the common end of worldly cunning. Those who, like her, attempt to entrap others, are often caught in their own snare. "In the same net which they hid privily is their foot taken." Such craftiness, in the long run, seldom, if ever, succeeds. It fails of its own object. It exposes those who practise it to disgrace.

It is a painful theme to dwell on such a character as that of Joanna Melvill. She said one thing and meant another. She threw discord into a once happy home; she praised her victim to her face, whilst she aimed to betray her to public scorn. She went about, having peace on her lips, but war was in her heart. Her words were "smoother than oil," and yet were they "very swords."

* * * * *

In conclusion, it is the privilege of every-

one, high or low, rich or poor, if accused of a crime, to have the benefit of a doubt; and this most just privilege must be extended to Joanna Melvill, as regards her acquaintance with Lord Hovingham. To trample upon a fallen woman would be ungenerous. Guilty or not guilty of a second fall from duty, her conscience must have smitten her to the last, for through her inordinate vanity and love of lucre she alienated a husband from a loving wife, disseminated falsehood, which led to charges of the most disgraceful nature; aided and abetted a weak, vacillating man in perpetrating a cruel wrong, and added to that heritage of woe to which he was doomed as "LORD OF HIMSELF."

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THE END.



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